

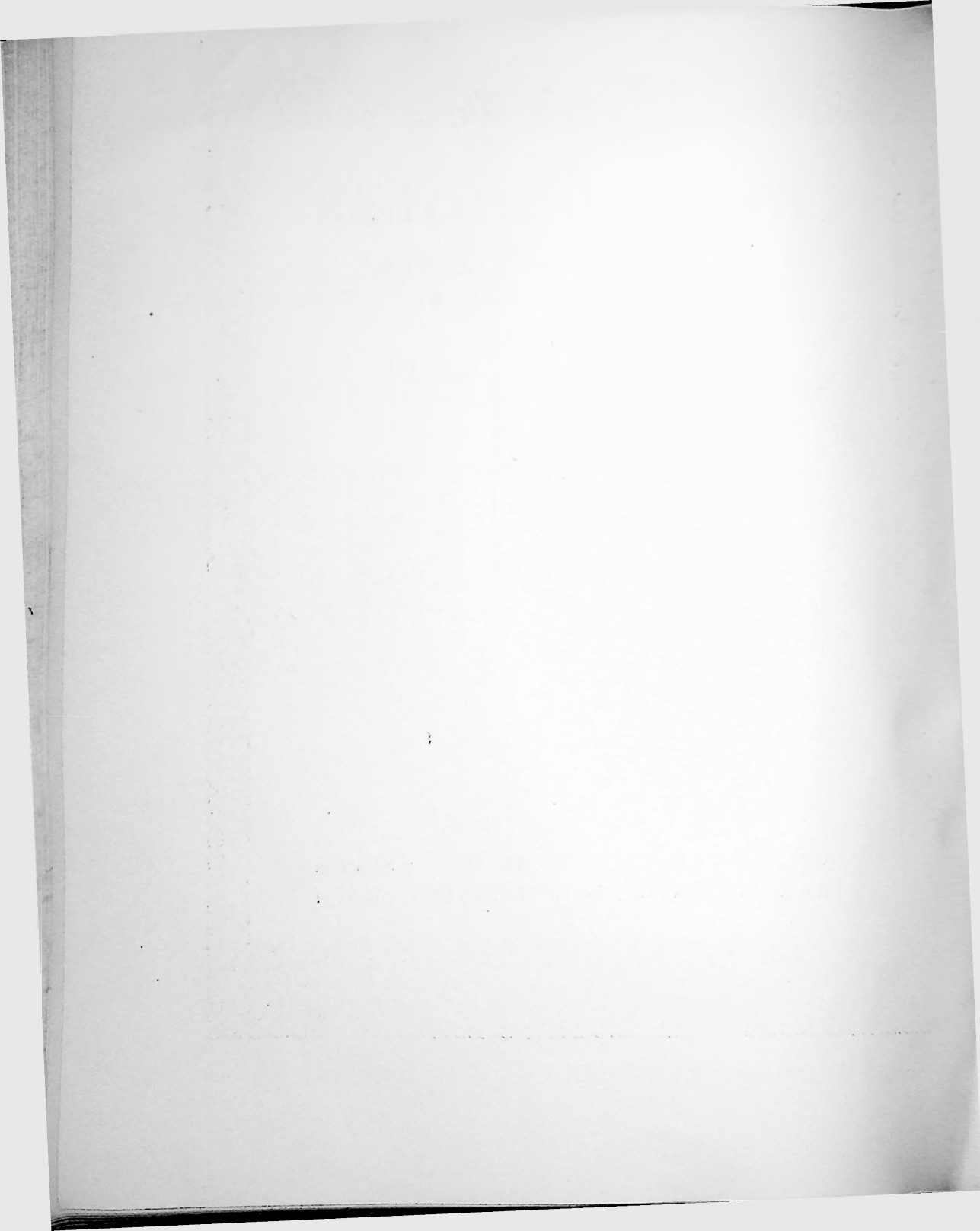
# THE OLD HOUSE

A HANDBOOK FOR PILGRIMS  
TO TALBOT HOUSE AT  
POPERINGHE

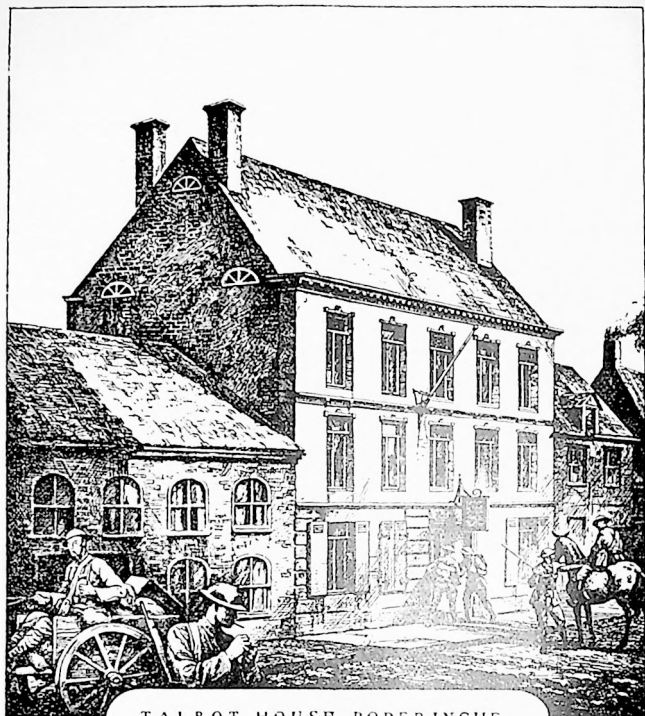


PUBLISHED BY TOC H AT FORTY-SEVEN  
FRANCIS STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1

ISSUED AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THE TOC H JOURNAL, DECEMBER, 1930: SIXPENCE



To  
LORD WAKEFIELD OF HYTHE  
whose inspired imagination and  
signal generosity restored The Old  
House to Toc H as a possession  
for ever, these pages are gratefully  
dedicated.



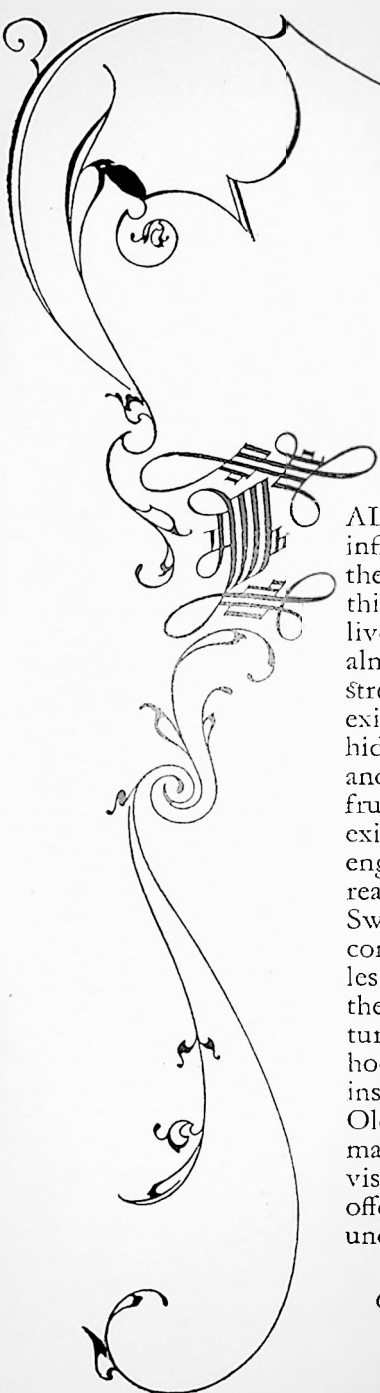
TALBOT HOUSE, POPERINGHE

*"Now, before the war was over there were many soldiers' clubs established along the rear of the battle-line, but I think no one would for a moment dispute the assertion that Talbot House was quite unlike any of the rest. There was something about it which none of the others had, something hard to describe but easy to experience, which made it what it was. I despair of being able to convey it to you in words, but let us go in imagination into the Old House and see what we shall find. Perhaps then we may understand."*

HAROLD HUBBARD

*from The Smoking Furnace and the Burning Lamp.*





*"Yborn it was in fer contree,  
In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,  
At Popering, in the Place."*

CHAUCER'S "SIR TOPAS."

ALBOT HOUSE IN POPERINGHE was but an infinitesimal item on the vast and confused canvas of the World War of 1914-1918. But whereas countless things which seemed of prime importance in men's lives at the time have passed out of existence and almost from remembrance, "this one thing defied the stream" of death and oblivion. Its precarious existence in those days held a far greater promise hidden in it than anyone then dreamed. It survives and grows to be the War's truest, because most fruitful, memorial. Talbot House in those days existed to serve the needs of men who were heavily engaged upon one tiny section of a front which reached from the North Sea to the borders of Switzerland; to-day it serves and is served in every continent by men whose warfare is different but not less real. Under the utmost variety of conditions in their lives and work the eyes of Toc H members turn back constantly to the birthplace of the brotherhood in which they themselves find so much inspiration, purpose and happiness. Now that the Old House in Poperinghe has passed into the permanent possession of Toc H and can be freely visited and used by its members, these pages are offered to the whole family as a simple aid to their understanding and enjoyment of it in detail.

BARCLAY BARON.

*Christmas, 1930.*

# THE SALIENT THEN AND NOW

NINETEEN-FIFTEEN.

**I**N lonely watches night by night  
Great visions burst upon my sight,  
For down the stretches of the sky  
The hosts of dead go marching by.

Strange ghostly banners o'er them float,  
Strange bugles sound an awful note,  
And all their faces and their eyes  
Are lit with starlight from the skies.

The anguish and the pain have passed  
And peace hath come to them at last,  
But in the stern looks linger still  
The iron purpose and the will.

Dear Christ who reign'st above the flood  
Of human tears and human blood,  
A weary road these men have trod—  
O house them in the home of God!

*Written in a field near Ypres, April, 1915.*

F. G. SCOTT.

NINETEEN-THIRTY

**I**N Ypres town the world goes by;  
The builders build, the motors run,  
Their tasks its busy housewives ply;  
And, tranquil in the August sun,  
The long-tormented ramparts lie,  
Like men whose toil is done.

In Hooge crater the roses blow,  
God's garden blossoms o'er the dead;  
And up the muddy ridge of woe  
To Passchendaele the cornfields spread.  
Death's bitter fields of long ago,  
To-day are harvested.

O land redeemed from war's red reign!  
Of English multitudes the grave;  
They broke your Salient's circling chain,  
Their bones your paths of freedom pave.  
Like you they too shall rise again,  
Who died your soul to save.

*Ypres, August, 1930.*

F. B. MACNUTT.



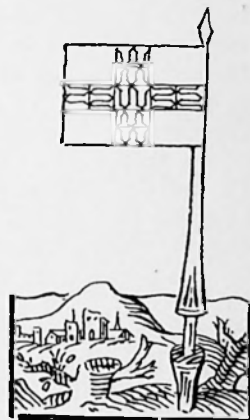
# THE STORY OF YPRES AND POPERINGHE AND OF THE COMING OF TALBOT HOUSE IN WAR AND PEACE



This little book is neither a history of Ypres nor a guide to the Salient, but both subjects demand more than a passing reference, for without Ypres and its battle-ground Poperinghe would have had no noteworthy place in the War and Talbot House would not have been founded or Toc H born there.

## I—The City of Ypres in History

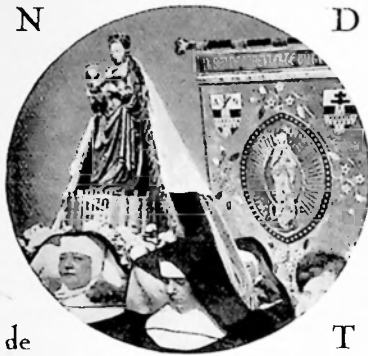
At several points before 1914 the story of Ypres has touch with England. *Hypra* (as the Latin chronicles call it) owes its legendary foundation to Hyperborus, "a captain of ancient Britain," who was said to have first settled—with 700 German slaves!—at Langemarck, to the north-east of the present city. The British and the Germans were certainly to be found at close quarters at Langemarck in October, 1914—but that is quite another story. Leaving legend aside, we see Ypres come into history as a handful of primitive dwellings clustering round a small castle on an island in the Yperlee stream: this was in the year A.D. 960. The village prospered, and a hundred years later, in 1073, we have record of a place with two parish churches and with municipal and royal privileges. Already its fortune was bound up with cloth weaving. Under the protection of the Counts of Flanders (from whose arms the blue and white "vair" cross in the Ypres coat-of-arms is taken) it outstripped its rivals Ghent and Bruges in the 12th and 13th centuries and was the greatest city in Flanders. It now had seven churches, 4,000 looms and a population of 200,000. And at this time it crowned its prosperity by building the famous Cloth Hall, which, in the opinion of one much-travelled observer, divided the honours with the Doge's Palace at Venice as the finest secular building in Europe.



*Banner of the Counts of Flanders.*

*From a 17th century woodcut.*

With the fourteenth century began a long series of misfortunes which were to reduce Ypres from the position of a proud city to that of the quiet country town which it was at the outbreak of war. In a time of great unrest Ypres allied itself with its old rivals Ghent and Bruges, and found itself in conflict with the Kings



Our Lady of the Palisade.

of France and England by turns. Its greatest disaster during the Hundred Years War is of special interest to us. In 1383 King Richard II. was persuaded to send an English expeditionary force to support the cause of Pope Urban VI. against the anti-Pope Clement VII., who was backed by France. Urban proclaimed absolution to all English "crusaders" and the English churches raised 2,500,000 francs; Henry Spencer, the fighting Bishop of Norwich, was made army commander in France, while the Bishop of London was to command in Spain. The Bishop of Norwich, tired of waiting at Calais for a fellow-general, decided to use "so fine a body of men-at-arms" against Flanders at once, and over-

bore all remonstrances that the Flemish were his natural allies against the French. He began by plundering a monastery; he took Gravelines and his troops slew 9,000 Flemish at Dunkirk. On June 9 he arrived before Ypres and laid siege to it, with the help of a detachment of its old rivals, the burghers of Ghent, until August 10. The incidents of the siege are graphically described by the chronicles of the time. The city was gallantly defended by its governor, Sir John de Saint Py, and the English never got a footing in it, although the ramparts were breached by stone cannon balls, while the famous English bowmen did fearful havoc, not only by their accurate "sniping" but by shooting blazing tow into the wooden houses which were soon on fire at many points. The inhabitants suffered terrible privations: food ran out and the English cut off the town water supply from Zillebeke and Dickebusch Lakes. When, in August, the news came that Charles VI., King of France, was advancing to the rescue from Arras at the head of 80,000 men, the English decamped in haste to Bourbourg. It was altogether a discreditable episode in our history, for which the immortal defence of Ypres by British troops against other besiegers over five centuries later was to atone.

#### "OUR LADY OF THE PALISADE"

It is interesting to note that the circumstances of the relief of the city from the English on August 10, 1383, are still commemorated at the greatest festival of the Ypres year—the "*Thuyndag*," which is always kept on the first Sunday in August. When their wooden houses were ablaze the women and children, the old people, the sick and the wounded took refuge in the stone churches, and spent much time in supplication before an image of the Blessed Virgin. The final assault of the English, delivered in the early morning, failed, and as

the enemy retired the people of Ypres turned their thoughts at once to thanksgiving. Their city had as yet no walls ; it was defended by its moat, backed by earthworks and a wooden palisade. The citizens now surrounded the statue of the Virgin with a wooden palisade (*thyn* in old Flemish) and called it " Our Lady of Thyn " or *Tuin*, in honour of her aid in their weak defensive position. Henceforward, on *Tuindag* or " Palisade Day " every year, the " Virgin of the Palisade " (in her present form a 16th century figure) has been carried round the walls of Ypres and back to the Cathedral. Originally this was done by the Franciscan Brothers Minor, but nowadays it is the proud privilege of nuns, the *Sœurs de Marie*, whose Convent in the Rue de Lille was once Little Talbot Flouse.

## DECLINE AND FALL

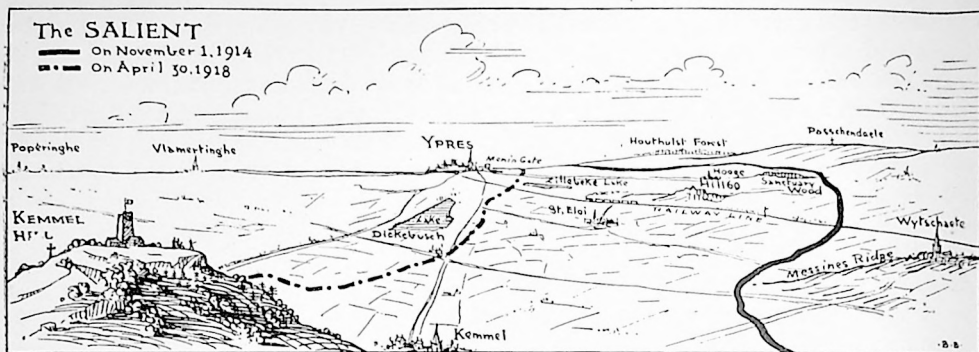
The siege left Ypres mortally wounded. Whole suburbs and thousands of looms were destroyed, and the homeless, workless weavers began to seek their livelihood elsewhere. This migration was to continue for two centuries, and by a strange miscarriage of historic justice it helped to make the fortune of East Anglia. With the aid of the Flemish weavers who settled there, England captured the cloth market. Norwich took its place among the noblest cities of the kingdom, and in the villages of Suffolk arose those cathedral-like churches which still surprise us to-day. Ypres had already given a universal name to a particular kind of woven pattern—the " all-over " design still called *diaper* (that is, *d'Yper*) ; and now English places—Worstead in Norfolk, Kersey and Linsey in Suffolk—were to immortalise themselves in the same way.

One misfortune after another struck Ypres down. A great pestilence in the 15th century and another in the 16th depopulated it until but 5,000 people remained, and the town was largely left in ruins. Its history thenceforward has little to record but pillage and massacre by one outsider after another. In 1481 it passed into the hands of Austria, in 1558 into those of Spain ; in the next century it was four times captured by the French, whose famous engineer, Vauban, built the Ramparts which defied even the heaviest artillery of the Great War and provide to-day a noble setting for the Menin Gate. In 1715 it was retaken by the Imperialists ; in 1792 by the French revolutionaries, who filled it again with bloodshed and ruin ; in 1815 it was handed over to the Netherlands ; finally, in 1830, it became part of the newly-founded kingdom of Belgium.



" GLORY-ALLY-BELORIUM, O ROGERUM."

## II—Ypres and its Salient, 1914-1918



On October 7, 1914, at 11 o'clock in the morning Ypres heard the guns, and two hours later the first great shells burst in the Square. On the same day 20,000 German troops entered the town. They remained for three days and retired in haste, never again to tread its streets, except as prisoners of the Allies, so long as the war lasted. On October 13 the first British troops received a tumultuous welcome from the inhabitants. Two days later—as Sir John French reckoned it—the First Battle of Ypres began. From that time onwards the ancient city was clearly destined to destruction. On November 10 it was first bombed from the air; on the 22nd the Cloth Hall was in flames and by the following evening was in ruins. Not a single building eventually escaped, and within two years the city provided that picture of desolation, crowned by the nobly tragic silhouette of the Cloth Hall tower, which remains so real in the minds of countless ex-Service men. It is difficult indeed for a visitor of the younger generation which knew not “Wipers,” to stand in the Square, where the Ostend charabancs are parked between gay cafés and the brand-new Cathedral of St. Martin, and picture the time when his predecessors, halting (but not too long) on the same spot, could look across the breast-high shattered houses and almost survey the city from end to end. At no time in its long, unhappy history was Ypres so desolate and yet so glorious.

Nearly every Regiment in the British Army, together with those of all the Overseas Dominions, units of the Indian Army, many squadrons of the Royal Air Force, French and American troops, and the innumerable non-combatant formations which are needed to keep a modern army in the field—all these contributed their proud annals to the making of the Salient's history. Each of these showed its shining examples of gallantry and left its dead in this ground, each has its own story of hardship and humour. Where so much unendurable agony was daily endured and where acts of heroism became the commonplace of the hour, it is surely difficult to frame a picture of the Salient in small compass. Many books concerning it have been published and many are yet to come, but the whole story can never be told in words: it is written in the lives and deaths of countless individual men. All that can be attempted here is the barest

outline of the main movements of which Ypres was the pivot and the events on the largest scale which took place in this small but vital piece of country.

#### OCTOBER, 1914, THE BIRTH OF THE SALIENT.

Turned back dramatically from the gates of Paris by the Allied victory of the Marne and the Battle of the Aisne, a great German force wheeled northwards through Lille and into the western corner of Flanders. On October 9, Antwerp, deemed to be an impregnable fortress, fell, and the Belgian Army was in retreat westwards. It seemed a matter of hours before the German victors of Antwerp would join forces with their troops retiring from the Marne: the Allied flank would be turned and all Belgium and Northern France—with its Channel ports so vital to the British Expeditionary Force—would be in their hands. There followed a "race for the sea" between the opposing armies. Sir John French sent his two Army Corps forward to cut off the Germans between Lille and the coast; at the same time a small British force landed at Ostend and began to march south to join the main body. The screen of German cavalry advanced west along the plain of the Lys (the country you see from Kemmel Hill looking southward); parties of Uhlans passed through Poperinghe and penetrated almost as far as Hazebrouck. They retired under the harassing attacks of French and British cavalry (the latter led by Byng and Allenby), and the 1st British Corps, under Sir Douglas Haig, was able to occupy the country covering Ypres on the east. The small British force, which had been continually marching and fighting, advanced almost gaily into this fateful ground, unaware as yet of the full strength of the enemy. Their orders were to capture Bruges and then to push the Germans back through Ghent. But in a little semicircle in front of Ypres they were brought to a standstill, on October 19, by the main German line. North of them the remnants of the retreating Belgian army were barricading themselves behind impassable floods for the duration of the War, and south of them the French, with British help, which increased rapidly as time went on, held the long line. Where they now stood in front of Ypres, the targets of converging fire, our men dug themselves in. The Ypres Salient was born.

#### OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 15, 1914: FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES.

At first, from October 23—30, French and British troops succeeded in pushing the enemy back on to the Passchendaele Ridge and gained more elbow room in the north of the Salient. The German commander, exasperated by this stubborn resistance, then began a series of tremendous attacks which lasted throughout the first fortnight of November. His troops were inspired by the presence of the Kaiser himself, who waited in readiness at Thielt for his triumphal entry into Ypres, the only unconquered Belgian city now remaining. Regardless of losses, his troops advanced in mass (as in the case of the heroic and tragic Marburg student battalion at Langemarck) but were held up at point-blank range by the rifle fire of the "Old Contemptibles." Our own losses were terrible—when the Seventh Division was relieved only 44 officers out of 400 remained, and 2,300 out of 12,000 men. The enemy's bid for the Channel ports was foiled—as it proved, for ever—by this "First Ypres."

## SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES, APRIL-JUNE, 1915.

If the winter was quiet by comparison, the conditions in which men lived and fought fierce engagements in detail (*e.g.*, at St. Eloi in March) had become terrible. The wet Flanders plain, continually churned up by artillery fire, became an unrelieved landscape of misery and mud such as no man had previously seen and no visitor of to-day can possibly imagine. With the Spring, fighting on the



*The Canadian Memorial  
at Saint Julien.*

grand scale was renewed. A German attack on April 14 was answered on the 17th by the British in an episode, local in itself but still famous for its ferocious intensity—the Battle of Hill 60. This knoll, so insignificant to the casual view but so valuable to the enemy for observation purposes, was tunnelled by our Engineers. At 7 p.m., on April 17, six explosions blew away the top of the hill and the infantry rushed forward to occupy the torn ground. The bloodiness of the hand-to-hand fighting there during the ensuing three days was never surpassed, probably never equalled, in the four years of bitter fighting round Ypres. The next move, which took place on April 22, the eve of St. George's Day, was unforgettable. In the middle of that afternoon two clouds of greenish vapour were seen to be rolling gently along the ground before the breeze towards our line north of Ypres. The first poison gas attack caught the Allies all unprepared. The French Colonial coloured troops broke in agony and panic before it, leaving our flank “in the air.” Behind the gas cloud two German corps, supported by artillery and machine guns, were advancing, and the brunt of the defence fell upon the Canadians and the men of the Northumbrian Division. Choked and blinded they retired slowly, always fighting, and then actually advanced and retook some of the lost ground. There was a wild struggle all that night, but by daylight reinforcements, hurriedly collected from other points, had stopped the great gap in the line through which the enemy somehow failed to pour his troops into Ypres. The suffering and gallantry of our soldiers, unprovided as they were with gas-masks, throughout this ordeal cannot be exaggerated; 2,000 of the Canadian dead hold the ground at St. Julien for ever, lying round a colossal brooding stone figure, which is one of the noblest memorials of the War. At this point the enemy continued to attack with only slight success, and on April 26 a general counter attack, in which Indian troops specially distinguished themselves, was made, but failed. But now it was clear that we could not hold so wide a front against such overwhelming superiority in numbers and artillery, and on May 2 our troops withdrew from a large area, silently and without losses. Three days later, again with the help of gas, the Germans won back the crest of Hill 60, and in the following days pressed us back in the centre of the Salient at Hooghe. Thus ended “Second Ypres.” The battle had cost the British 100,000 men and the Germans double that number. But still Ypres, growing more ruinous every day, was untaken.

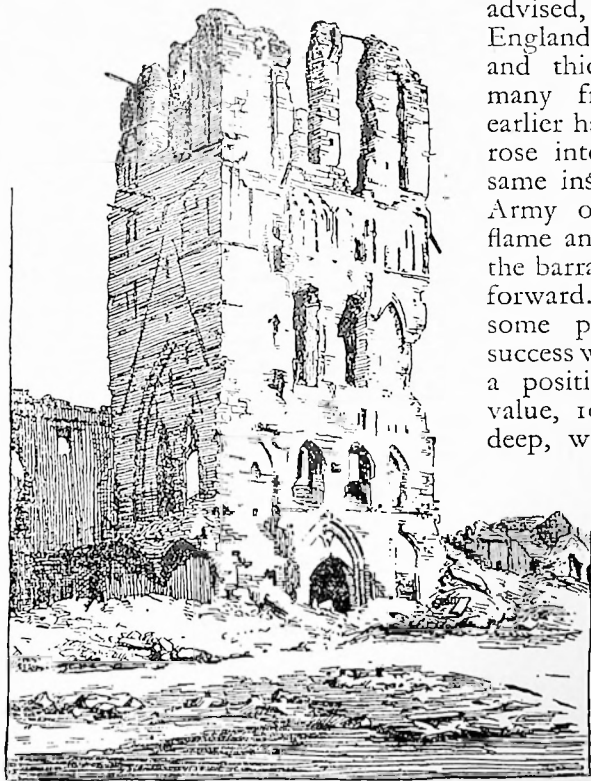


## THE BATTLE OF MESSINES, JUNE 7-15, 1917.

For two weary years the opposing armies, besieged and besiegers, settled down to trench warfare in the Flanders mud. The Germans had the advantage all this time of the rising ground east of Ypres from which they overlooked the movements of our patient and tormented men in the sodden plain. To relieve this situation, grown intolerable, it was necessary first to gain possession of the ridge on which the villages of Messines and Wytschaete stand. By the Summer of '17 the high ground farther south—the Somme uplands and Vimy Ridge—was secure, and the Battle of Messines could be undertaken. It had been long and carefully prepared. For years our tunnellers had been at work and 470 tons of explosive lay under the ridge ready for the fateful touch. A belt of guns of all calibres, four thousand yards in depth, had been wonderfully hidden between Ypres and Armentieres. Eight days of artillery preparation preceded the assault and in this time nearly 100,000 tons of ammunition and 70 tons of gas were poured into the enemy positions. The opening of the battle proper was one of the most dramatic moments of the War. Just after 3 a.m. on June 7, the simultaneous explosion of nineteen mines shook the surrounding

country. The Prime Minister, secretly advised, listened to the sound of it in England. Huge black pillars of earth and thick smoke, carrying with them many fragments of what a moment earlier had been unsuspecting living men, rose into the summer dawn, and at the same instant all the guns of the Second Army opened out in a semi-circle of flame and unimaginable sound. Behind the barrage the infantry advanced steadily forward. There was fierce fighting at some points, but twelve hours later success was almost complete. By June 15 a position of immense strength and value, 10 miles wide and over two miles deep, was entirely in our hands. Men

may be pardoned at such a time for seeing victory in sight. They could not see how intense an agony was now to begin. For efforts to which "the nation had given three years of toil and suffering and half a century's savings" were not yet to achieve final success.



*The tower of the Cloth Hall at Ypres  
in 1917*

The high ground north of Messines, on either side of the Menin Road, remained in enemy hands and must now be taken in order to deliver Ypres. Happenings in other theatres of war, little known to the British soldier or successfully hidden from him, played a tremendous part in this new battle and added greatly to its grimness. In April, the French had opened a grand, and as they hoped, decisive, action on the Aisne with a million and a quarter specially trained men. Judged by its captures, the attack was not a failure, but it failed of its main object—the expulsion of the German Army from French soil. Disappointment led to serious mutiny in one French corps after another. The commander-in-chief was superseded, but the French Army was in no state to undertake, alongside the British, the projected Summer campaign. In May, the Italians were thrown on the defensive; in October, they broke and ran at Caporetto, and Lord Plumer was sent to Italy from the Salient with the British Second Army to help restore the situation. His place in Flanders was temporarily taken by Lord Rawlinson with the Fourth Army. Early in July the Russian Army made one last heroic effort, and then the whole country collapsed into the chaos of revolution. These events had freed many German divisions, which it now fell specially to our lot to keep heavily employed until the *morale* elsewhere was restored. The British fighting man, busy in Flanders with his own particular patch of trench and mud and wire, could not be expected to appreciate world politics, and in the cold, wet winter of 1917 began himself to mutter dangerously about the unrelenting sacrifice demanded of him, the purpose of which he could not understand. The prelude to this winter of his obstinate and unrecorded suffering was the Third Battle of Ypres.

After enormous preparations and too many postponements, the attack was opened on July 31. It was a bad beginning, for a morning of sunshine turned to rain, one of our most insidious enemies in the war. The ground, ploughed up by terrific bombardment, became a morass almost impassable to infantry and a grave to tanks; guns were bogged, observation obscured. The Fifth Army struggled doggedly forward, but the main battle plan was ruined, and the enemy had breathing space to organise his counter attack. Only the war in the air was able to reach unprecedented proportions. The British staff planned a fresh start for September 20, and on that morning eleven divisions advanced in soaking rain and mist and carried many positions towards the rising ground. On October 1 the German counter attack was delivered, with an indescribable fury of fire from guns now released from the Russian front, but regained nothing of importance; on the 4th the British attacked again, and advanced appreciably. Under normal conditions, our command would probably have been content to defend the position thus won until a spring offensive could begin. But at all costs German attention must be diverted from the French and Italian reorganisations, and the tired British troops must know no rest for another five weeks. By November 10 the high-lying village of Passchendaele was secure in our hands, and it is that pregnant name which stands enshrined in the minds of the men who endured the Third Battle of Ypres.

SOUVENIR  
DE  
POPERINGHE  
1917.



Philip Thomas

## THE EPIC OF SPRING, 1918.

No words can fully display the tremendous picture of the last "Big Push," and few words only can be given to it here. The final desperate cast of the hard-pressed German nation was now to be made. The storm broke further south, in the early morning of the memorable March 21, when "a strength exceeding the whole of the British Army in France" fell upon the French and ourselves on a 50-mile front. The Fifth Army was forced back, the Third had to follow, and within a week the enemy was in possession of more than the old Somme battlefield which it had taken the bitter sacrifices of 1916-17 to win. On April 9, they delivered a similar blow further north, on the Lys, at the point where a Portuguese division, due to be relieved by the British that very night, was in the line. These troops broke, and the enemy poured into the gap. Our men in the Salient, hearing the heavy gunfire and confused rumours of that morning, knew that their own turn must come. There was for us no more critical day in the war than April 12, when the struggle had already touched the southern edge of the Salient, and Sir Douglas Haig issued his famous order, "Our backs are to the wall." The weight of the attack continued, however, to fall in France, not Flanders, and to meet it every available man was needed. By April 15, therefore, the ridge of hard-won Passchendaele had been abandoned and the defensive line in front of Ypres greatly shortened. That night the Germans entered Bailleul, and the next day Meteren; they were now well west of Ypres, and the Salient had never assumed so dangerous an acute angle. On April 25 Kemmel Hill was lost—and what that meant to our troops the visitor of to-day may guess as he stands on its peaceful summit and surveys the whole Flanders battlefield from end to end. It seemed at the time almost as though the enemy must now march along the whole range of the "Mounts of Flanders" to Boulogne and the sea. But at this point the German troops, exhausted by the unprecedented fury of their attack, stayed their advance finally. At their backs the spirit of a starving nation was crumbling, and before their faces, in the month of May, 50,000 fresh American troops a week were pouring into France. While the Salient sullenly held throughout that summer, Marshal Foch was delivering one counter-stroke after another, the series of master moves which was to bring decisive victory at last.

As the pressure was relaxed, the Salient ceased to be, and Ypres, the proud ruins of an unstormed citadel, slipped into a quiet backwater, tenanted by a few Labour companies, and held by a few military police. Until the end of August it still heard the distant rumbling of guns along the Scheldt, and witnessed the last shell of countless thousands burst in the Grande Place. So until the Armistice it slept, securely held by the grand army of its dead.

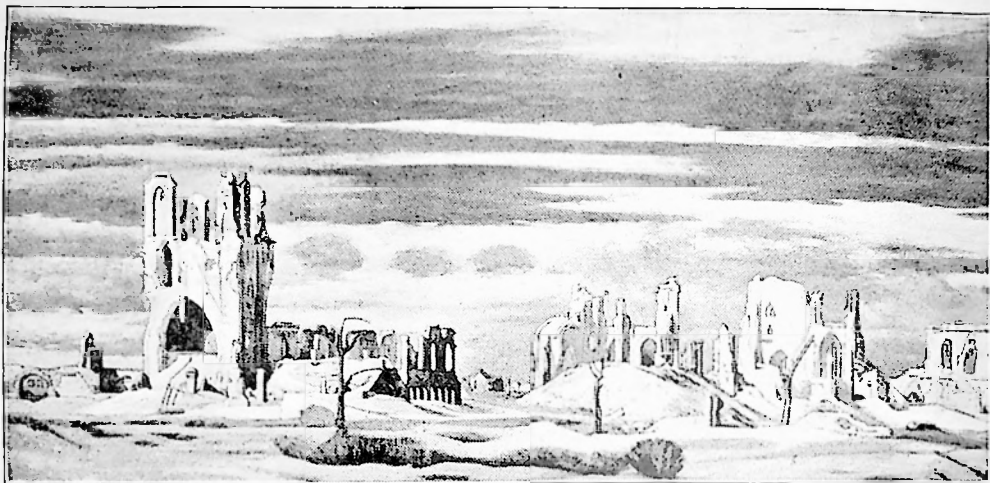
### "A NAME TO RESOUND FOR AGES."

The name of Ypres among all the place names of the Great War occupies a unique niche in the memory and imagination of the British race. This can be said without disparagement of the places on any other front where our men fought. For four years Ypres was an objective which the enemy never ceased to covet and never captured, the pivot of ceaseless fighting and of three battles



on the grand scale, the centre of a little patch of country which witnessed more intense and continuous effort and gallantry and agony than any other like-sized piece of land of which human history bears record. The total number of men fighting under the British flag—men of many races fighting on many fronts by land and sea and air—who made the Supreme Sacrifice was, in round figures, 1,150,000. Of these, 254,000—or nearly a quarter—fell in this little semi-circle, roughly six miles in diameter, which became known simply as “The Salient.” And out of these, nearly 100,000 have left names but no known graves; their bodies were swallowed up in the abysmal mud of Flanders. So expensive an occupation is without parallel in the thousand years of English history; nowhere else to-day is such a graveyard to be seen.

If the origin of the Salient was almost an accident, long before the end it had become more than merely one “sector” in the long line of the Front—it was to us (as Verdun was to the French) a symbol of the spirit of our race, its tenacity and its indomitable and long-suffering gallantry. To surrender Verdun, as a French general said in its extremity, “would be for France a blow over the heart.” And when political and military opinion in 1916 inclined towards withdrawal from Ypres in order to “straighten the line” west of it, and when again the enemy’s last onslaught in 1918 seemed to dictate such an abandonment of the ruined city, the men who had fought there found this sacrifice unthinkable; they felt also that its effect on the nation at home would be little short of disastrous. This “blow over the heart” was never delivered; almost surrounded by fire, as it was in May, 1918, the City of Ypres still held. To read its name was to see a flag flying, to hear it spoken was like the call of a bugle. All that “Wipers”



*The Ruins of Ypres at the time of the Armistice.*

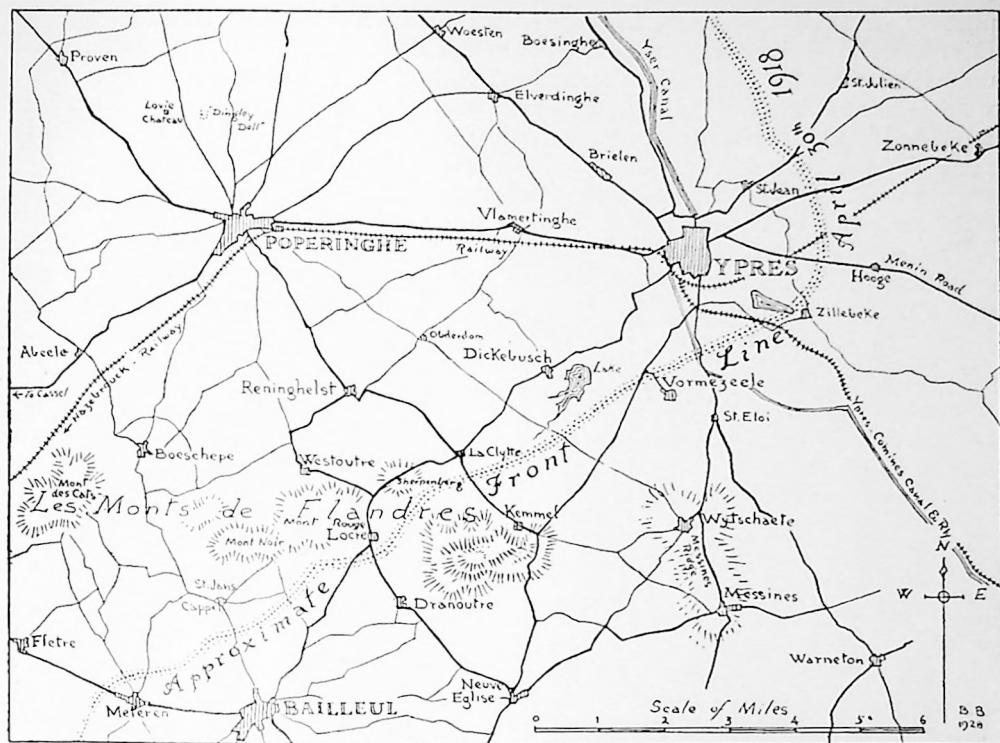
meant to one generation can only be known to those who defended it with their bodies and their wills and to those who lost men dearest to them in that defence, but its name at least will never be missing out of the English history books in the years to come.

In 1914 and again in 1918 tens of thousands of French soldiers fought here and left many dead in Flanders. Nor must it now be forgotten that the name of Ypres means much to those who fought against us and gave the flower of their manhood to this ground, very often in graves unknown. Already in the first year of the War the German General Staff's official history contained this sentence: "The Battle of Ypres (October, 1914) will be a memorial to German heroism and self-sacrifice for all time and will long remain a source of inspiration for the historian and the poet." To the end "Ypern" stood for our opponents in the forefront of the names of the War. As we wander in safety to-day about this peaceful landscape, catching sight at every turn of the white shaft of a Cross of Sacrifice, each one betokening the resting place of British dead, we shall also see here and there against the sky the taller and more gaunt Tree of Calvary which marks a German cemetery. And it then behoves us to remember that half the fortitude and suffering and bereavement which lies upon the brows of Ypres like a crown of thorns, belongs on the far side of a boundary once so vital, now so hard to trace, the old Front Line.

The military cemetery at Cambrai made by the Germans in 1917 to receive not only their own dead but ours, thus delivered from imprisonment, centres on a single great cube of stone. On each of its faces (one broken by a British shell) is carved the same inscription—but in four languages, German, French, English and Russian. It reads thus:—

*The Sword Divides, the Cross Unites.*

### III—Poperinghe and Talbot House



A GLANCE at the sketch map will show at once the position and significance of the little market town of Poperinghe during the War. In the early weeks a few Uhlans, the cavalry screen of the advancing German host, penetrated Westwards beyond it, and before Christmas 1914 a certain number of British soldiers, hurrying into Flanders from the Aisne, must have marched Eastwards through its streets. Early in 1915 its place in the life of our men had already become plain. On February 4, Sir Herbert (now Lord) Plumer moved up with the Fifth Corps from Hazebrouck and took over Poperinghe from the French, and thenceforward to the end English became, with Flemish and French, the third language of its inhabitants. On March 12 the first bombs from an enemy plane, forerunners of so many, fell in the Square. On April 22, the day of the first gas attack in the Salient, watchers on the church towers of Poperinghe plainly saw Ypres ablaze; next day the streets were crammed with infantry and cavalry streaming up to fill the gap in the line, and so many ambulances unloaded gassed and wounded men in the town that the hospitals overflowed into bell tents on the outskirts. On April 26, the first 12-inch shells burst here: two hours later the road was blocked by the first pathetic exodus of



civilians. All these scenes—bombing, shelling, evacuation, troops and supplies moving up, wounded coming down—were now for three years to be the familiar portion of Poperinghe. Geography had made it indeed a funnel by which Division after Division was poured into the Salient and returned, battered but unbeaten, out of it. But if Poperinghe thus played its inevitable part in the work of the War, it also had a special niche in the leisure of it. The town remained (with a few dangerous interludes) the first strictly habitable and homely place for the man coming out of the Ypres fighting. Its houses grew shabby with marks of shrapnel and flying bomb splinters, and a few were completely destroyed, but, by comparison with life a few miles Eastward, it seemed wonderfully safe. The streets were full of life, the shops were open, the women cooked countless omelettes for soldiers, the children went to school. Beer and barrel-organ music were purveyed by its *estaminers*, pictures by its improvised cinemas; it was a warm and friendly place, and men counted it good fortune to be there.

#### THE DEATH OF GILBERT TALBOT.

An event in the Summer of 1915 planted a name long known and honoured in English history in this obscure Belgian town, and all for which the name of Talbot came thus to stand enshrined Poperinghe in a quite special way in the



*Keith Ray's Cross at Hooze.*

hearts of thousands of serving soldiers and has made it a place of pilgrimage to their successors. On the morning of July 30, 1915, the first attack by liquid fire fell upon a company of the Rifle Brigade in trenches near Hooze, and a piece of ground—certainly through no fault of its defenders—was lost. A counter-attack, delivered later in the day by another company of the same battalion, was a failure, and its cost was out of all

proportion to its importance. Among the officers killed were Keith Ray, a notable leader of boys at Oxford, whose memorial cross to-day marks the spot at Hooze, Sidney Woodroffe, fresh from school at Marlborough, who was awarded a posthumous V.C., and Gilbert Talbot, the brilliant youngest son of the then Bishop of Winchester.

Gilbert's body was recovered a few days later by his brother, Neville, at that time Senior Chaplain of the 6th Division, now Bishop of Pretoria. Among the other Chaplains of the 6th Division were Harold Bates and Philip Clayton ("Tubby" to all his friends then and since), and it was by these three Padres that a soldiers' club was opened in Poperinghe later in the year. At the instance of Major-General Sir Reginald May (at that time Col. May, of 6th Division "Q" staff) it was given the name of "Talbot House." It was thus a memorial to Gilbert Talbot, himself representative of many thousands of men who exchanged the promise of a fine career for the stern and simple duty which demanded their Supreme Sacrifice.





GILBERT TALBOT

## TALBOT HOUSE OPENS.

At the end of November, 1915, the tall white house, No. 35, Rue de l'Hôpital (in Flemish, Gasthuisstraat), was taken over at a monthly rental from its Belgian owner, M. Coevoet Camerlynck, who removed with his family to France. The House opened its big doors to troops on December 11, and never again closed them until its evacuation (see p. 52) in May, 1918: it re-opened in October. What the need for it was and how great the service rendered can best be seen by readers of Tubby's *Tales of Talbot House*, and *Plain Tales from Flanders*, and no attempt can here be made to summarise the story.

From first to last the personality of Tubby as the "Innkeeper" gave the House a remarkable character of its own. A unique feature was summed up in one of the mottoes displayed within it—"All rank abandon, ye that enter here." As a true "Everyman's Club," it was used by all ranks alike until the end, but when the growing number of its officer visitants threatened to overweight it, Neville Talbot took steps to found also an Officers' Club, which occupied the fine old Flemish house, now Skindles Hotel, a hundred yards up the same street. The comprehensive character of the House was reflected in its committee. Here is a list, copied from its notice board by a visitor in October, 1917:—

### TALBOT HOUSE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE.

*President :*

Lt.-Gen. Sir IVOR MAXSE, K.C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O., Commanding XVIII Corps.

*Vice-Presidents :*

Lt.-Gen. H. E. WATTS, C.B., C.M.G., Commanding XIX Corps.

Brig.-Gen. P. M. DAVIES, D.A. and Q.M.G., XVIII Corps.

Rev. NEVILLE TALBOT, A.C.G., Fifth Army.

*Chairman :*

Major G. B. BOWES, T.D., Delousing Station, Poperinghe.

*Vice Chairman :*

Major L. H. RUGG, R.E., O.C., Fifth Army Tramways.

*Treasurer :*

Capt. W. A. T. KIDD, O.C., 214th Army Troops Company, R.E.

*Secretary :*

Pte. E. EVANS, Delousing Station, Poperinghe.

*Members :*

Rev. H. G. MARSHALL, D.A.C.G., XVIII Corps.

Rev. P. B. CLAYTON, C.F., Resident Chaplain, Talbot House.

Capt. COATBRIDGE WILLIAMS, Adjnt. 43rd Labour Group.

Capt. R. F. GUNN, "D" Bty., Tank Corps.

2nd/Lieut. LOWMAN, R.E., O.C., P.P. Cable Section, Fifth Army.

C.S.-M. G. T. BARBER, 213th Army Troops Company, R.E.

Sergt. MILLAR, Town Major's Office, Poperinghe.

Sergt. MEQUINIS, Fifth Army Intelligence, Poperinghe.

L./Cpl. BLACKHURST, R.E., R.T.O.'s Office, Poperinghe.

Sapper LAYCOCK, Fifth Army Signals, Poperinghe.

But the dominating factor in the life of Talbot House in every part was an intensely active and high-hearted Christian faith. Founded as the House was by Church of England Padres, this naturally found Anglican modes of expression for the most part, but men of all Christian denominations—and of none at all—found themselves welcomed and at home. Religious observances were not thrust upon its visitors, but those who sought could surely find, and even those who did not seek could not help but feel more than man's leadership in the fellowship of the place. Tubby was indeed the faithful steward of the House, but its master was the Divine Carpenter, whose Bench stood in the Upper Room.

## LITTLE TALBOT HOUSE AT YPRES

Tubby, now detached from his Division for this special duty, was officially known as "Garrison Chaplain of Poperinghe," but he did not restrict his work to the House. He moved about, ministering to batteries and isolated units in the Salient, and late in 1917 he founded a "daughter-house" in Ypres itself. This occupied the ground floor and cellars of a lace-factory, now the Convent of the Sœurs de Marie, No. 87, Rue de Lille. The upper floors were shattered, and no other building except the ruins of the ancient Post Office was upstanding in the whole street. The situation was obviously one of touch-and-go, and indeed the first consignment of furniture left on the premises was blown to pieces before it could be put in position. But Little Talbot House was opened on November 11, under the leadership of Padre R. J. Goodwin, and did its job steadily for its hard pressed clients until April, 1918, when Ypres was closely beset by the German advance and all its billets were evacuated (see p. 52). The canteen and reading rooms occupied the ground floor, while one cellar was curtained off as a reading room when not in use as a chapel, and others contained sleeping quarters and kitchen. "There was not a man," wrote a user, "who came there who did not go away cheered and brightened." To-day the building is completely restored, and a plate on its front records the tenancy of Little Talbot House.



*Little Talbot House, Ypres.*

### TOC H: THE RE-BIRTH.

If the story of Talbot House in the War cannot be told in detail in these pages, still less can that of the post-war movement which sprang directly from it and has spread round the world. No visible embodiment of it was to be seen at home until the end of 1919, for Tubby was occupied throughout that year in the work of the Ordination Test School for Service Candidates, housed in Knutsford Prison, a great foundation which had its tiny beginnings in Talbot House itself (see p. 49). Early in 1920 a small flat at 36, Red Lion Square, London, welcomed survivors of the Salient who had known and loved Talbot House. Ten years later, in 1930, over 800 bodies of men, the Branches and Groups of Toc H., in the United Kingdom, in every British Dominion, in India, in South America, the United States and, still in early stages, on the Continent of Europe, bear the name of Talbot House and owe allegiance to its family spirit! The affectionate diminutive "Toc H" (the initials T.H., pronounced, now as in war-time, according to the Army signaller's alphabet) has stood since 1915 for something joyfully simple. Toc H, now as then, is a rallying point for a great fellowship of men, most diverse in origin, outlook and ability, who are pledged to serve. The service of war-time has given place to the manifold voluntary spare-time activities of these days; the fellowship, in all its variety and unity,

goes forward unchanged. And so a living and growing society helps to hand on to a new generation the best thing the War revealed to its predecessors—the team-spirit dedicated to great ends.\*

#### LORD WAKEFIELD'S GIFT AND ITS USE.

Early in 1919 the Belgian owner of the House returned to live in it. He began at once to receive visits from ex-Service men who had known the House; several large Pilgrimage parties were admitted, and the number of individual callers, from England and from overseas, continually increased year by year until it ran into many hundreds. The eventual purchase of Talbot House by Toc H naturally suggested itself, but was only made possible by the imaginative generosity of Lord Wakefield of Hythe. At the great Birthday Festival gathering of Toc H in the Albert Hall, London, in December 1929, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, as Patron of Toc H, announced to the delighted Family assembled this wonderful Christmas present of "the Old House," purchased and permanently endowed. Under Belgian law it was necessary for the property to be held, to the extent of three-fifths, by Belgian nationals. An *Association de Talbot House de Poperinghe* was therefore formed and registered in the *Moniteur Belge* of April 25, 1930: its chairman was Major Paul Slessor, who had taken the leading part in the negotiations for purchasing the House and in its re-furnishing, and the Burgomasters of Poperinghe and Ypres were among its members. Much had to be done to fit the premises for their new occupation—for Poperinghe does not boast a town water supply or drainage system. The House, with its central point, the Upper Room, once more restored for use, was solemnly entered on April 28, 1930, by Neville Talbot and Tubby, its first founders, at the head of over thirty Toc H staff padres. It was a joyful and deeply moving moment which those present are not likely to forget.

And what use is to be made of this remarkable possession? To every Toc H member who visits it this House, of which he has heard so much, must have an obvious appeal, and it is hoped that even the most casual stranger who enters will not leave without some understanding of its meaning. But Toc H is wont to look back only in order better to go forward. The Old House therefore is to be no war museum. The few relics of old days which hang upon its walls serve only to link a living past with a living present; the furniture of the Upper Room, its most precious contents, is not there merely for sentimental sight-seeing but to play a most actual part in men's lives. Nor is the Old House to be simply a hostel which may serve as a base for "battlefield tours." It is to be rather a training place, made more significant by the immense background of the Salient and the history of the Elder Brethren who passed over there, a centre where young Toc H members, the likely leaders of the future, may come for conference, inspiration, refreshment of mind and spirit, a power-house of serving men. Many a man, perplexed and burdened by the confusing detail of everyday, will enter here to find his solutions in the simple secret of the Old House, for, as one wrote in war days, it is "a place that has kinship with Bethlehem."

\*Further information about Toc H, its whereabouts and its work, can be had on application to its British Headquarters, 47, Francis Street, London, S.W.1.

## A LITTLE VADE-MECUM



*Guardsmen in the Lounge, 1916*

IT is hoped that the notes which follow may help the visitor to form a clearer picture of Talbot House as he passes from room to room and finds himself truly at home under a roof which has sheltered countless guests before him. If he arrives by train at Poperinghe Station he will walk by the Rue d'Ypres to the big cobbled Grande Place, with its modern Gothic town hall in one corner and ancient tower of St. Bertin's Church in the other, and on entering the Rue de l'Hôpital will at once see the "Hospital" (an old religious foundation) on the right, and a little beyond it Talbot House, rising a storey higher than its neighbours. Over the front door hangs the old sign-board, now protected by glass :—

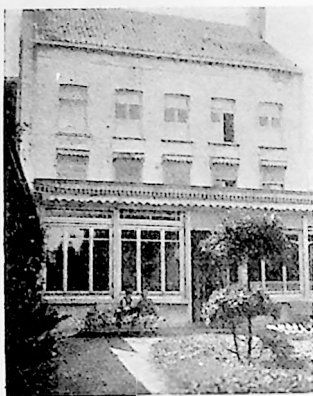
TALBOT HOUSE  
EVERYMAN'S CLUB  
1915—?

and on a shutter a framed inscription (painted at the end of the war but not publicly displayed until 1930) which runs :—" *Nisi Dominus frustra*.—During the Great War this House was famous throughout the British Armies. It was called Talbot House in memory of Gilbert Talbot of the Rifle Brigade, who died in action near Sanctuary Wood in July, 1915. The house was rented from its owner, M. Coevoet-Camerlynck, in December, 1915, and remained through three stormy years the playroom of the troops who held the Salient. Providentially immune through all bombardments, Talbot House closed, its work accomplished, in December, 1918. In the Chapel, constructed by the Queen's Westminster Rifles in the large Upper Room, many thousands of officers and men received the Blessed Sacrament.—P. B. Clayton, Garrison Chaplain."

### THE GROUND FLOOR.

Passing through the big white double doors, with their ornamental ironwork, the visitor finds himself in the entrance hall, which used in war-time to present an animated scene at any

hour of the day. Just inside the door he is warned by a small board painted with a hand pointing towards the street and the words PESSIMISTS, WAY OUT : this expressed at the outset the cheerful temper of the House and forced many a tired man to his first smile. On one wall hangs a new Notice Board, occupying the same position and space as its predecessor, round which men



*The House from the back*

would cluster to read (sometimes with caustic comment) the day's official *communiqué* and to chuckle over the notices in Tubby's handwriting which constantly changed to make room for the latest jest or request of the moment. Several of the original notices bidding men welcome to the House (see p. 40) now hang beside the Board, flanked by an Army map—the Hazebrouck sheet of Belgium on the 1 : 100,000 scale. The places most frequented by troops fighting or going on leave (e.g., Ypres and the Salient, Poperinghe, Armentieres, Hazebrouck, S. Omer), are heavily marked, and in some cases obliterated, by the constant fingering of men's dirty hands—for this map long hung in the hall for public use. Internal evidence shows it to have been "won" from 162 Heavy Battery, R.G.A.: it was finally salvaged and brought home by Padre Humphrey Money, for a time in 1917 in charge of the House.

Other notices and bits of handwriting connected with the history of the House hang in the hall (see *From the Notice Board*, below), and two cards, printed by the R.E.

on the spot, which run "IF YOU ARE IN THE HABIT OF SPITTING ON THE CARPET AT HOME, PLEASE DO IT HERE" and "GENIUS IS CONSTITUTIONALLY UNTIDY. BUT—, P.B.C." (returned by Mark XIV, Salford). An original inscription remains painted on the wall, as follows :—*"This Board is intended for the use of men who wish to get into touch with friends, who may possibly see a message left for them. Please use cards provided or put communications in an envelope before placing in the rack. P. B. Clayton."* Beside it now hangs a long typed list, on much-stained sheets, of men who made use of this "Friendship's Corner," e.g., "Gunner S. Morrison, 'D' Howitzer Battery, 21 Brigade, R.F.A., B.E.F. would like to hear from Private G. Morrison"—and against the Gunner's name the pencil note "Killed in action"; one man "would like to meet his brother George," another "his cousin of the Guards (C.G.)," another "any Devonian," many "old pals," etc.

The Canteen, ready to satisfy the soldier's first and most elementary need, naturally confronted him upon the ground floor. Three rooms on the left of the hall opened into each other by folding doors—the first a gorgeously gilded drawing-room (now the Steward's bedroom), the next a gloomy dining-room, the third a tiled "conservatory" looking through large windows on the garden. These served as Lounge and writing-room, variously furnished at different periods of the war. When the House re-opened in October, 1918, the first room was used for the Library, which had previously been upstairs; while a billiard table occupied the dining-room, and Tubby worked in the Conservatory. A photograph taken in 1916 (when cameras were strictly taboo) shows Guardsmen in the conservatory, against a romantic painted background which survived the war and was finally removed by its owner. The visitor who sits writing in the Lounge to-day must picture it much patched and very differently furnished. The big windows had been smashed by a shell and the ceiling scattered on the floor before Talbot House began its tenancy; window panes of oiled linen, a table formed of two semicircular tent-boards covered with wall-paper, and "easy" chairs with packing-case frames and sacking upholstery were among its luxuries.



On the right of the Hall, near the front door, a tiny office room served temporarily as the Chapel just before and after the closing of the House in the Summer of 1918. The kitchen and its sitting-room on the garden were—as now—sacred to the staff of the House.

#### IN THE GARDEN.

Step into the long sheltered garden, with its beautiful variety of trees and fruit. It offered great attractions to the soldier, provided with a mug of tea and a friend: here he took his ease, right out of the war—though, indeed, a shell bursting here in 1917 produced the only fatal casualty on the premises during our tenancy (see p. 43). On the whole the 1916 notice *Come into the garden and forget about the War* was justified. A manhole in the lawn covers the entrance to large cellars (once those of a hop warehouse standing, years before the war, on this spot), which were sometimes used as a frankly inadequate “funk-hole” when enemy bombing planes were busy over Poperinghe. An artesian well, over 300 feet deep, has been sunk beside it and connected with the new bath “Pavilion” which caters for the post-war needs of Toc H pilgrims. A reminder of simple active service conditions can still be traced on the



*The Summer House*

door of the boiler shed alongside—the word “Bathhouse” written by a very amateur sign-painter.

In the left-hand corner of the lawn is the “Aviary” in which Neville Talbot (himself 6 ft. 5 in.) proposed that his huge charger “Jumbo” should “play the part of large canary” on a visit in 1916. Beyond it, in the long range of outbuilding was found, in 1915, when the House was first taken over, the much-worn Carpenter’s Bench, which was carried indoors to serve as the altar of the Chapel, and which has become the most precious piece of furniture which Toc H will ever possess (see p. 36). The comic and characteristic Summer House on its mound in the middle of the garden is original but without special history.

#### A MEMORY OF THE CONCERT HALL.

In the centre of the left-hand garden wall, surmounted by a tiled niche, a bricked-up doorway still indicates the entrance to the Concert Hall of Talbot House. This was “ingeniously contrived out of an adjoining hop-store” by the 8th Corps in the Spring of 1917, when preparation for the Battle of Messines (see p. 11) was filling Poperinghe with fresh troops. A temporary wooden staircase led up to the Hall and its astonishing variety of entertainment night by night. The impromptu acting of plays here is referred to in *Tales of Talbot House* (p. 73) and a very moving incident here (“Follow me ‘ome”) is described in *Plain Tales from Flanders*.



*The House Staff entertain the British West India Regt. after a debate on “The Colour Problem” in the Concert Hall.*

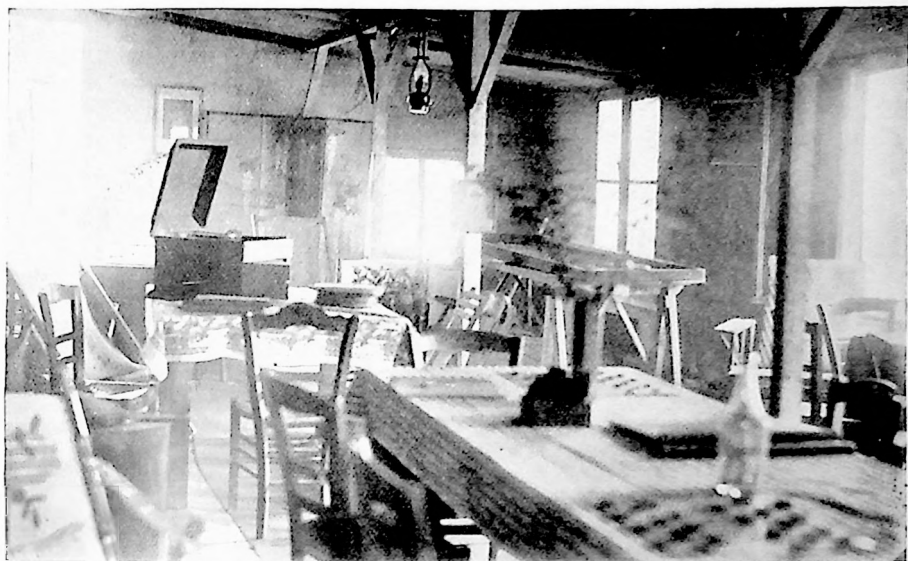
Let us gain another glimpse from the pen of a soldier\* who was temporarily attached to the domestic staff at that time:—"The Old House has shut for the night, the last straggler has been ejected, the last penny has been taken at the canteen for a hurried cup of tea, but as yet no move has been made to turn out the lights on the ground floor. Visitors are expected. By special permission two Companies of Infantry billeted near by are coming in for a late concert. In the hop-loft across the garden the Sunday furnishings have been carefully stored away and the stage has been set with old sheets of canvas to form wings and back cloth. The tramp of marching men is heard and the stirring marching song *O Rogerum* reverberates through silent Pop; our guests have arrived. Crowding in with cheery *badinage* to all and sundry they file through the House and take their seats in the hop-loft as keenly interested as if they were in the pit of their own local theatre at home. The concert begins, but not before a dark and secret conference between Tubby and the musical director has taken place to decide how some half a dozen scratch turns collected in the course of the day by the former are to be sandwiched into an already complete programme. Now all is arranged and Tubby steps on to the platform to open the proceedings with a cheery word to the troops. He meets with a certain amount of good-natured heckling but gives as good as he gets. To-night we are very fortunate. Some of the 55th Divisional Concert Party are with us and some of the Divisional band, not to mention two dear old souls from a labour Battalion who are going to do their best. The pianist is now heard at work playing popular songs and the full-throated response from the audience sets the keynote for the whole evening's proceedings. Who is the comedian, just taking his applause? Why, Du Calion, the well-known music hall artist who does and says such clever and alarming things whilst balanced at the top of a long ladder. True, the height of the hop-loft forbids the use of his ladder, but what of that?—the troops don't expect to find a music hall artist of his eminence playing for their pleasure in a spot like this. A quartet of brass instruments has just played some popular opera airs, which please all mightily; an aged Permanent Base man (who earns his living in peace time making and selling woollen flowers at fairs and on race-courses) has obliged with *She's the pride of Liscarrell, is Sweet Katie O'Farrell* and has made the whole room sing the chorus with him in true sentimental fashion; a tenor and an elocutionist have charmed us; whilst last but not least Tubby has sung *The Midshipmite* and has had everybody singing a beat behind him in the lugubrious lines which refer to the 'Lowland Sea.' The concert is over, the Commanding Officer has made a speech of thanks, the troops have given three cheers for the artists and away they march to their billets with *Rogerum* helping them along. The Staff lock up and retire to rest hoping the concert will, however slightly, have helped their comrades to face still cheerfully the horrors and rigours of the Ypres Salient."

#### AND NOW UPSTAIRS.

Returning to the House the visitor will find a notice at the foot of the staircase inviting him to "Come upstairs and risk meeting the Chaplain (see p. 42). And at the corners of this winding stairway, its treads not built for Army boots, he is warned against the melancholy lapse of a late Countess of Leicester in the words "NO AMY ROBSART STUNTS ON THESE STAIRS, PLEASE!" A peal of tubular bells (now at the Test School at Hawarden) stood on the stairs and summoned worshippers to the Chapel. On the first-floor landing, now hung with frames containing many oddments of ancient history and with a series of printed notices of services in the Chapel, five doors open to him. The little room immediately to his right once housed the Library over the door of which ran the legend "*This is a Library, not a Dormitory.*" "To imagine Talbot House Library" (says *Plain Tales*) "you must conceive of a very large cupboard, or a very small room, so crammed with books that the librarian himself could sometimes scarcely enter. To borrow one of these books you left your Army cap in pawn, and took the volume to any part

\* R. H. Brewster, one of the "two old Q.W.R. friends" mentioned in *Tales*, p. 45.





*The Canadian Lounge*

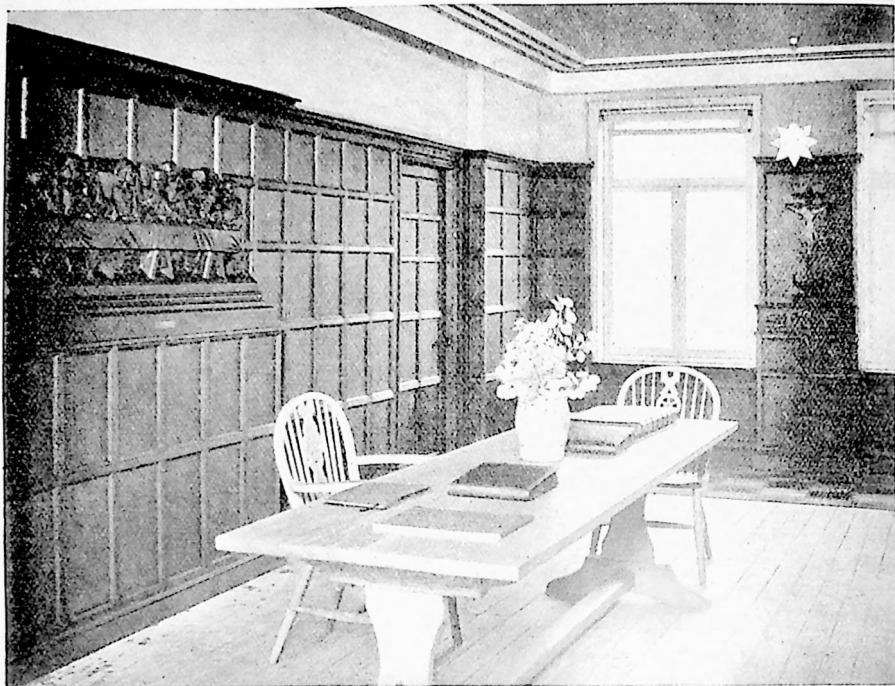
of the House or garden where you spied a comfortable chair or a corner unappropriated.' Some of the original books are now upstairs (see pp. 59-63). It was a "war of movement" for the individual, even if the front line seemed stationary, and the furniture and uses of different rooms in the House moved about from time to time. The room on the garden side facing the Library was normally a Writing Room but it exchanged functions at one period with the Chaplain's Room next door. And it is on the Writing Room door that the painted legend, grown famous in *Toc H* story, still remains—*All Rank abandon, ye who enter here*. This signalled the Chaplain's Room (as it is again to-day), Tubby's particular den, where many a shy secret was disclosed, many a perplexity resolved, many a mixed party of all ranks overcame official barriers and found itself at one. Half an hour in this room often retained a special place in the memory of men, some still living, many since dead. The room in the centre, over the front door, was normally Tubby's bedroom: it was at one time turned ambitiously into the "General's bedroom on account of a bed with real sheets."

Step to one of the landing windows facing the garden. The flat roof of the "conservatory" is just outside, and you must try to picture it as the floor—with gashes in the leads from shell splinters boarded over—of the "Canadian Lounge." It was a strictly temporary but cosy structure, built by soldiers, and the only photograph of it, here reproduced, suggests the many uses to which it was put. It was entered by steps through the landing window.

The first floor then, epitomises much of the purpose of the House—study as well as sleep, not only the laughter of friends but the problems of heavy hearts. The chapter "Two Customers" in *Plain Tales from Flanders* gives some typical glimpses of its activities.

#### THE UPPER LANDING.

When the visitor reaches the landing on the second floor, panelled in 1930, he stands in the original Chapel of Talbot House. From the first the Chapel held its place in the minds of the Founders as the centre of the life of the House. Already on December 6, 1915, a week before



*The Upper Landing, 1930*

Talbot House opened, Tubby wrote home to his mother that "on Sunday morning (*December 12*) at 11.15 we have the first Celebration in our Chapel—the big landing on the second floor. There is room for fifty or sixty, and I hope we shall have it full." On *December 15* he wrote "On Sunday, our little Chapel was full for the Celebration at 11.15 and there is every promise of it being a centre of real work and worship among the men coming and going through here. I am very happy and cheerful about this." The first Christmas in the House was a very joyful time, and on Sunday, *December 26*, Tubby was able to write home that "the Chapel on the landing is simply splendid—everyone has put in time, taste and trouble to make it as perfect as possible. The only disadvantage is that it will only hold fifty at the outside. We hold Evensong there daily at 7.15, with a congregation of about ten, Celebrations on Saturdays, etc., but if we can get the huge attic licensed by the R.E.'s to carry the weight of numbers, we shall move our Church up there. On Christmas Eve we had an early Celebration for a company of Q.W.R.'s who were going up to the trenches for Christmas. In the evening we had Festal Evensong, followed by a Celebration for night duty men; both were well attended, but there were no communicants that night—the natural feeling against making one's Communion at night is very strongly felt here; and those for whom I had intended it got off and came yesterday morning. Three chaps rigged up a glorious little Crib with lint, cotton wool, and a Christmas star. Then an electrician rigged up a tiny lamp off a dry battery to shine down from the top—they burnt it all down once after two day's work, trying to fix a candle—and it stood on a bamboo plant stand, discovered in the garden, and draped beside the Carpenter's Bench altar. We

had the Church furnished well with joyful guests at 7 and 8, and again at 11.30, both yesterday and to-day . . . Chap after chap said that they didn't think it possible to have spent so happy a Christmas away from home." By the middle of January the landing was crowded out on Sunday evenings and the moving of the Chapel to the Upper Room above was urgent. Tubby then went down with malaria and was sent to the Base Hospital at Boulogne: Neville Talbot took over at Poperinghe and wrote to Tubby on January 25 that "the Wednesday service came off and the Sunday night service was as full as possible, with the General in the royal box. I haven't coped with the attic yet but long to." On February 1, Tubby was back again and two days later was able to write home that the Chapel had been moved to the Upper Room.

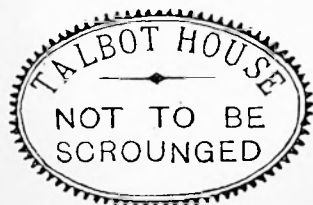
The Upper Landing is thus a true "Ante-Chapel," the way to the Upper Room which is the central shrine of Toc H. Where the Carpenter's Bench stood for those first seven weeks of the House's life, there now rests a Toc H Lamp of Maintenance, which is dedicated "to the Glory of God and in Proud Thanksgiving for the lives and examples of all the Elder Brethren—'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.' " Above it hangs a figure of Our Lord, the work of a woodcarver and Passion Player of Oberammergau, whence it was brought home in 1922 by Herbert James Fleming, the beloved first Administrative Padre of Toc H, who passed over in 1926: it is here placed to his memory. And before it hangs a star-like lantern as a reminder of the Crib of 1915 with its Christmas Star.

On the long wall, facing the visitor as he reaches the landing from below, is a fine unfinished oak carving of Leonardo's "Last Supper," dating perhaps from the eighteenth century and presumably intended for some Flemish church. It was purchased early for 200 frs. from the *avocat* of M. Flamand of Ypres for the Chapel of Talbot House. But so anxious was Tubby for its safety that he took it home to England, packed in his valise, when he went on leave in 1916. During the rest of the War it stood in the War Chapel of St. Mary's, Portsea; later it went, with other Chapel furniture, to Knutsford Test School, then to Mark I in London.

The four doors at the corners of the landing opened into bedrooms in war days. Here stretchers and blankets were in nightly use by officers coming off the "leave train" after midnight or departing by it at 5 a.m. This accommodation was "more than a leave-goer required, or than a returning officer expected," and, together with a supper of cocoa and biscuits or a cold-meat breakfast, cost him five francs. And it included "attendance," for Tubby was often about the House at night to tuck him up or turn him out.

Two of the doors now give access to the new Library, a pleasant long room which in the old days was divided into two bedrooms by a wooden partition and large cupboard. A book-case with glass doors now houses all that has been recovered—500 volumes—of the original War-time Library of the House. It is a queer and catholic assortment, as anyone can see who consults the catalogue (see pp. 59-63), but these well-worn books, with many others now scattered and lost, were a boon beyond saying to countless hungry readers.

War books and others will be found on the open shelves, and some albums of photographs of the Salient. The pictures on the walls have been presented by their artists, mainly since the House became Toc H property.



*Impressions of Rubber Stamps (now in the Library bookcase) used in the Houses during the War.*



## THE CARPENTER'S BENCH

**H**ERE others knelt before the fight  
And yielded all to Thy skilled hand  
To carve and trim and shape aright,  
For Thou alone dost understand,  
Who givest all men life and breath—  
God-Carpenter of Nazareth.

Here at this workshop board so rough  
They ate and drank and, in Thy might,  
Went forth, to prove it is enough  
To be like Thee and face the night.  
So fill me also with Thy Breath,  
God-Carpenter of Nazareth.

God-Carpenter, to Thee I pray;  
Thou knowest all that Thou canst use;  
The flaws Thy Hand must cut away,  
Take me and do as Thou dost choose,  
In life or death to toil for Thee  
Who gav'st Thyself to ransom me.

As Thou didst toil with human hands  
In daily tasks at craft of man,  
Join us to Thee by Love's strong bands  
As humble fragments of Thy Plan,  
In silence shaped to fill the place  
Prepared before Thy Father's Face.

REV. C. CAMERON WALLER,  
*Principal, Huron College, Canada*

## IN THE UPPER ROOM

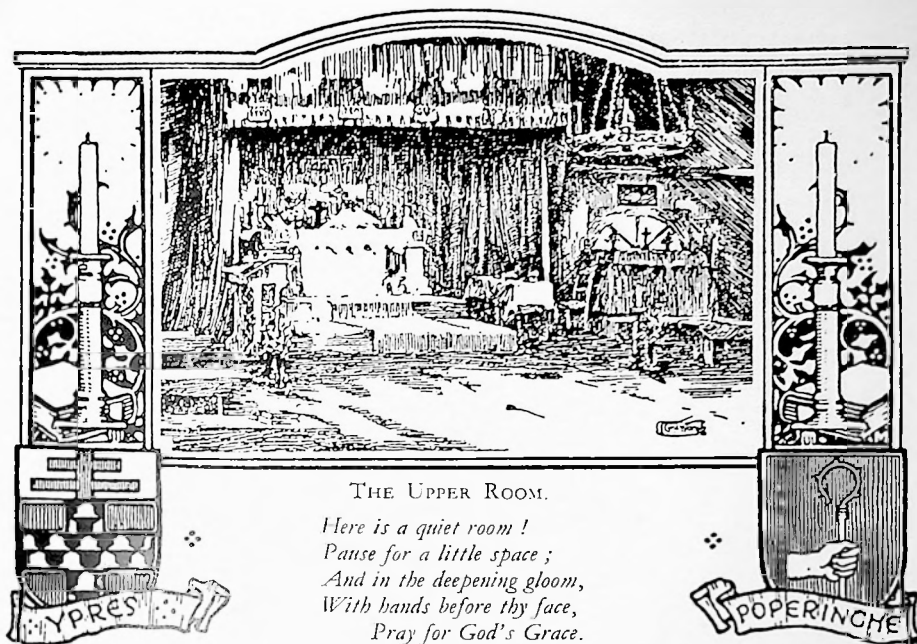
**H**ANDS that are laid on the priest's hands, pressing the Paten and Cup,  
Figure divinely confirming that which is here lifted up,  
King from Thy throne condescending once more to make Thyself known,  
Christ at the Carpenter's work-bench broken and risen and shown—  
Surely our eyes apprehend Thee, surely old mercies avail!  
Surely the sentinel spirits leap to Thy loving "All hail!"

*With their "Aye! Alleluia!  
Blessing and honour and glory and majesty, wisdom and virtue and might  
Be unto Him who hath loved us and laved us and made us a people of Light."*

Kneeling the needy await Thee, hungry to hold Thee anew:  
Hark! they have sealed their summons. List! they have vowed to be true—  
True to the task of to-morrow, true to the oath they have sworn,  
True to the men who before them knelt in yon garret, new-born.  
Out of the household of Caesar sprang this great household of Youth.  
Whisper one word of commandment. Fashion and frame it in truth,

*Till we cry "Eleison!  
Purge us of scornfulness, turn us from heedlessness, spur us to live for the Right!"  
Love and Humility, Faith and Fraternity—these are the liegemen of Light.*

P. B. C.



The visitor must now set his feet upon the steep painted stairs, a real Jacob's Ladder, which lead from the Upper Landing to the Upper Room. As he ascends he should try to picture that great company which he follows, the thousands upon thousands whose heavy Army boots have worn thin the treads beneath his feet. As his head comes above the floor level at the top he will have before him the Upper Room, in almost every detail the same scene as was painted by a soldier-artist in 1916 and thereby made familiar to people all round the world who may never see it with their mortal eyes. He now stands at the heart of Talbot House, in the central shrine of Toc H, a room unique among the historic Holy Places of the Christian faith. Much of the story of this Chapel has been told in *Tales of Talbot House* (chapter VIII) : the history of its three war years can never be told in its entirety—so rich it is in the secrets of men's lives.

Almost from the first, as we have seen, it was the intention of the Founders to transfer the Chapel from the Upper Landing. "It was Padre Crisford of the L.R.B.," writes Tubby, "who insisted on its exaltation to the big hop-loft above. The difficulty of this step lay in the fact that one wall of this attic had been holed by a shell ; and even when this damage was repaired, the R.E.'s entered their caveat against the soundness of the floor. There ensued a series of consultations which grew gloomier in ascending ratio of rank." It was only by disregarding expert opinion that the Upper Room was finally opened in February, 1916. When a congregation was assembled here during bombardment, as sometimes happened, the rashness of the move seemed clear, but "there was at such times a curious feeling of comfort and peace in the complete impotence which threw the mind wholly upon the unknown will of God" (*Tales*, p. 54).

\*War-time verses by Donald Cox ; the sketch in the centre by Cyril Worsley, 1916.



*The restored Upper Room, December, 1930*

The weakness of the floor was so pronounced that the central space, carpeted then as it is now, was never used by the congregation, who occupied benches and a few chairs round three sides of the room. Several patches of biscuit-tin, tacked to the boards by the Queen's Westminster Riflemen who first arranged the Chapel, are still to be seen: they cover holes in the floor torn by splinters of the shell which struck the north-east corner of the House in 1915. In 1930, when repairs could be undertaken, it was found necessary to insert girders to carry the floor, to reinforce some of the roof timbers, and to replace with light slates the old roofing tiles whose weight was causing the beams to sag dangerously.

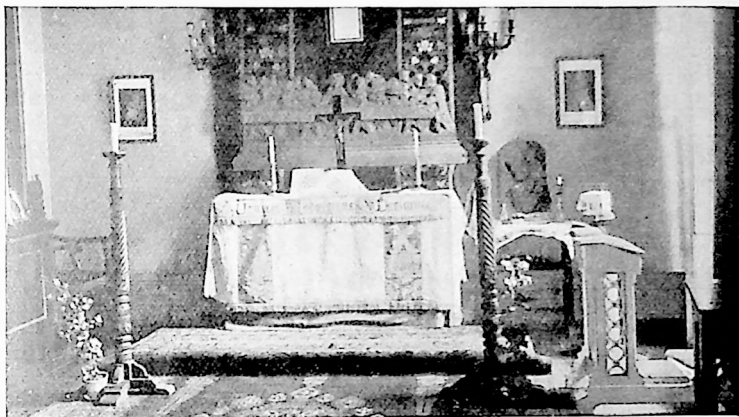
From the morning early in 1916 when Holy Communion was here first celebrated, until the tremendous events of Spring two years later compelled its evacuation, the Upper Room was never closed by day or night. Anyone who climbed the stairs in the night time might find "two or three gathered together," officers and men lately down from the unspeakable experiences of the front line, or, maybe, just back from leave at home and about to return to the furnace whose fires they knew only too well. Here they knelt, scarcely discerned in the darkness which a night-flying enemy imposed upon them, their only light the tiny glow above the altar and the intermittent flickers through the low windows of gun-fire a few miles Eastward. Or on a Sunday evening you might find the stairs half blocked with men and the Upper Room itself thronged with a joyful singing congregation of a hundred. Some of the congregations at Festivals were memorable. The first Holy Week (1916) was "observed with a completeness never before attempted in a place so near the line. . . The daily services were full, and the Three



Hours' Service conducted by Neville drew together a cluster of about fifty Christian men—among them the Corps Commander, seated between a lieutenant and a private." That Easter Day, between 5.30 a.m. and afternoon, saw the Chapel crowded at one Celebration after another, while "the whole of the floor below the Chapel was full of congregations waiting to replace that already above"—in all more than 400 men. The numbers at Easter, 1917, grew to 500; in 1918, owing to the military situation, only 100 were able to come.

So the Upper Room continued to serve all comers until the fateful Spring of 1918. When the systematic bombardment of Poperinghe made its use inadvisable, its contents were moved downstairs; the most valuable furniture was loaded for safety on railway trucks by the Railway Operating Department, and at last, on a night when rumour predicted the capture of Poperinghe, the last of its fittings were moved in a Ford car to Cassel. On the reopening of the House that Autumn the little room on the ground floor (see p. 55) received most of this furniture.

The contents of the Upper Room reached England, fortunately, almost complete. They were first used again by the Ordination Candidates at Knutsford (see p. 49). With the opening of Mark I early in 1920, they came to London. The Mark was housed for two months at 8, Queen's Gate Place, then at 23, Queen's Gate Gardens, until, in 1928, it moved to 24, Pembroke Gar-



*The Chapel at Mark I, Queen's Gate Gardens, 1928*

dens. In each case a West-end drawing-room had to do duty, instead of this old hop-loft, as a Chapel, but in spite of the complete change of surroundings the original fittings helped wonderfully to preserve the atmosphere of the Upper Room, and the sense of brotherhood and purpose within was as real as ever. When the gift of the Old House was announced in December, 1929, one of the first concerns in many minds was the restoration, as nearly as might be, of the Upper Room. The hostellers of Mark I loyally offered to surrender all the things which had for ten years been their most treasured possession: their Chapel was accordingly stripped bare and its historic contents shipped again to Belgium. The Room itself had fortunately remained untouched and little used by its Belgian owner. It had not even received a fresh coat of whitewash, and the old nails remained in the walls to show where its pictures and ornaments had once hung. At the end of April, 1930, Paul Slessor and "the Gen."\* were able to unpack and rearrange its contents, and on the 28th, Neville Talbot and Tubby, the first Founders, led a body of over 30 Toc H Padres up the stairs for its rededication.

Let the visitor of to-day be conscious of the Presence which fills this place and of the unseen cloud of witnesses which bear testimony continually to the Light which here they found and which sufficed them for the day of trial. Aware of his kinship with these men, let him enter the Upper Room with confidence and a joyful mind and look more closely at the things it contains.

\* Pte. A. Pettifer ("The General") of the Buffs, Tubby's batman, now a Vice-President of Toc H.



At the head of the stairs, on the end wall of the Room, hangs the ALMS BOX of the Old Chapel, made in 1917 by the 234 Road Construction Company, R.E., whose Memorial it is. This Company worked in the Salient under difficult and frequently dangerous conditions throughout the period of the Defensive, and many Members of it were also members of the Old House. Capt. Aldred, the O.C., an ever-helpful friend, died in the influenza epidemic in February 1919, immediately on his return. The now faded motto on the box is "*What I spent I lost; what I gave I have.*" After the War this box was used in the London Houses for free-will offerings to mission schools in Cape Province which have on their staff Harry Oldfield, once Sergt. in the 45th Field Ambulance, a devoted member who was the first pioneer of Toc H in South Africa.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the same wall hang three frames. Two contain cards headed PRECANDI—containing lists of special friends of the House, the absent living or the dead, for whom Tubby was accustomed to ask the prayers of the congregation. These two, examples of many such, are almost duplicates. They date from about October, 1916, and the five Elder Brethren, "*in Christo,*" had recently been killed on the Somme: their honoured names—Geoffrey Gardner, Rupert Inglis, Guy Dawkins, Harold Philbey, Edmund Street—will be found in *Tales of Talbot House* and other Toc H literature. The names of five Confirmation candidates are also noted. The third frame contains a pencil drawing made in 1927, of the "Deserted Sanctuary," the empty Upper Room as it appeared from 1919 to 1930.

\* \* \* \* \*

In its proper place *i.e.*, at the entrance to the Church—stands the FONT. This little biscuit-china replica of the old black stone font of Winchester Cathedral has a curious history. It was sent out from England to Australia about the year 1880 to Tubby's mother, and was used for his own Christening many miles up country in Queensland, in December 1885. It was rescued after the great Queensland Floods in 1894, when most of his father's property there was destroyed. It came home to the family, and when Tubby went to France in 1915 it naturally did not occur to him that a Font, however small, could conceivably be required. Soon after, however, it became clear that quite a number of those with whom he had to deal had never been baptised, and his mother, therefore, sent out the Font, which was first used in France on December 27, 1915, for the baptism of Sergt. W. H. Berry, who was like to die as the result of severe wounds received at the opening of the Battle of Loos a few days previously. "I can well remember," writes Tubby, "the scene of its first use thus, with a drummer boy (still a Member of Toc H) kneeling by the side of Sergt. Berry's stretcher at the entrance to a hospital tent." The Font then came to Poperinghe, and was used there during the next four years for a great number of baptisms—English, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and British West Indian natives. The last baptism conducted with it was that of three B.W.I. Ammunition Carriers, sponsored by three of their own Sergeants who were already Christians. This was held at Evensong on a week-night in the Autumn of 1917, and was attended by a large number, both of Canadians and Australians, as well as home countrymen. At the actual moment of baptism five Chinamen, who had somehow made their way into the House and up to the top of it, climbed the steep staircase to the Chapel, and stood quietly witnessing the Ceremony, the significance of which it is possible they grasped in some measure without interpretation.

The PILLAR on which the Font stands was constructed, like the tall candlesticks, from a carved Belgian bedpost. It is dedicated to the memory of Lieut. H. W. Morris, and was made under the direction of a brother officer. The pair of plain oak candlesticks which stand beside it were also the work and gift of soldiers.

\* \* \* \* \*

From this entrance point the eye naturally travels to the Altar itself. It is approached by a disproportionately large "sanctuary," marked out by the fine CARPET in black and gold, which was purchased at S. Omer in 1916. The reason for this clear space (for the carpet was trodden only by the celebrant, not by the congregation) was the weakness of the floor centre, shaken by shelling. Communicants knelt to receive on the old red carpet STRIP, flanked by two tall oak CANDELESTICKS. These were made of carved bed-posts, fitted with bases and sconces to hold the candles by soldiers: one is inscribed "*Presented to Talbot House Chapel by a Canadian Gunner, 1917,*" the other "*A.M.D.G. In memory of the Australians who worshipped here, 1917.*" The cost of the first (about £5) was borne by Driver Ketchum of the Canadian R.G.A. The Australian candlestick was especially in memory of the Australian Engineers whose lives were sacrificed in the tunnelling operations during the Messines Offensive.

\* \* \* \* \*

The CRUCIFIX (replacing a white plaster one since lost) which now hangs on the "rood beam" in the centre, bears an iron Figure, and has a special interest, though it was not used in this position in the Old House. The Figure itself was found, covered with rust, in the mud of the canal bank, near the "Dead End" of Ypres, and nearer still to the grave of a Canadian, known to hundreds who passed along the eastern side of the Canal. This grave bore an inscription placed there by comrades inviting all troops who subsequently passed that way to lay what tribute they might on the grave of a true man. The Figure, which presumably came from some destroyed Belgian cemetery, was found a few yards from the grave and may have been intended for such an offering. After careful cleaning it was given to an R.E. Company to be placed upon a Cross, and the only difficulty was that a Sergeant-in-charge had scruples about the actual process of nailing the Hands and Feet of Our Lord.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Altar slab itself, now concealed by the original blue and white FRONTAL added in 1916, is without parallel. For it is the top of the battered CARPENTER'S BENCH, found in the desolate garden of the House, before it was opened to troops (see p. 27). It was used for the Celebration on the first day of the House's history and has been in continual use since. As a symbol of the Divine Carpenter, continually at work upon the wills of men, it has always held a central place in men's thoughts about Toc H. During the worst period in 1918, the original legs were removed (the present supports were made after the War) and the slab packed in canvas for immediate removal: failing that, it was to have been burnt rather than suffer desecration.

A supplementary green FRONTAL, with figures of the Virgin and Child embroidered in the centre by the Wantage Sisters, was given in 1916 in memory of officers and men of the Guards Division by Lieut. Stokes, Welsh Guards: this was later used on the side Altar. The purple frontal, with a white cross (seen in the picture on p. 34), is also original.

Lieut. Stokes was also the donor of the ALTAR BOOK, sent back to the Upper Room from Mark XV, Woolwich. The CANDELESTICKS upon the Altar were purchased in Poperinghe or S. Omer and have no special history. The VASES were the gift of Lady Byng of Vimy.

\* \* \* \* \*

The red HANGINGS of the Altar are the original ones sent out at the end of 1915 by Bishop Talbot, then at Farnham. They came from the old private Chapel of the Bishop's House at Southwark, and were first erected in their present stout framework by the machine gunners of the Queen's Westminsters, who furnished the Upper Room in 1915.

Above the Altar hangs a Medici PRINT of Perugino's Crucifixion Triptych, originally framed by L/Cpl. Bert Stagg of the Q.W.R. out of the top of an old bamboo table.

The Altar LINEN has had mainly to be replaced. The soiled white Burse still in use was sent out from home in 1916. One lace veil is also very early, being the work of some Belgian Nuns in one of the Poperinghe Convents, and purchased from them by the 6th London Field Ambulance, as a Memorial to many of their Members who communicated here.

The VESSELS used still in the Upper Room are of special interest. The most sacred memories attach to the silver-gilt CHALICE, originally Tubby's personal property, which was used throughout the War. A tense moment in its history here is described in "A Changed Use" in *Plain Tales from Flanders*. It bears an inscription round its base to the following effect: *He was seen of above 5,000 brethren: some are fallen asleep*. The number here stated is far less than the full figure, either for the War or since. It is probably true that some 25,000 men in all have made their Communion amid these surroundings, many of them going hence to an almost immediate death in action. The PATEN is original; but the CRUETS have been replaced.

A new silver CHALICE and PATEN, modelled on a beautiful old English design, were added in 1930 for the use of Free Churchmen. They were given in memory of Clifford Hugh Reed, M.C., the first Wesleyan chaplain to be killed, who fell on Messines Ridge on June 7, 1917: they were the gift of his sister and brothers.

The silver WAFER BOX is one of the earliest manufactured Memorials in the Chapel. It came from the relatives of Rifleman Newton Gammon of the Queen's Westminster, who was killed on the Somme. Whether it was made in England, France or Flanders is uncertain.

A PYX, which was used constantly by Tubby for the Communion of the sick and to carry the consecrated Elements from the Upper Room to battery positions and trenches in the Salient,



has not returned but is now kept for use in All Hallows Church, Barking-by-the-Tower, of which he has been vicar since 1922. The Pyx, which stands 4½ inches high, has a silver top, the "roof" of which with its tiny dormer windows covers the consecrated Bread, while its glass base holds the Wine. Round the rim runs the inscription: *A Pyx for the great Gift of Love, from the poor of Beeston Street, Portsmouth, to the B.E.F. In constant use, 1915-1918, in Talbot House, Poperinghe*. A very moving incident in its history is related in "A Pyx in Flanders" in *Plain Tales*.

\* \* \* \* \*

A large oak CHAIR, with a back which can swing forward to form a table, stands beside the Altar. It was purchased in St. Omer, and used by Bishop Gwynne for Confirmations in Talbot House. It bears two plates, one of them, of brass, made on the spot, and the other of silver subsequently, connecting it with the memory of L/Cpl. Archie Forrest, who was both baptised and confirmed in the Old Chapel in July, 1917, and was killed a few weeks after his first Communion. His fine story is told in the chapter "They shall grow not old" in *Plain Tales from Flanders*.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the wall to the left of the Altar hangs a small French picture in a faded gilt frame: it is called "Venez a Moi," and was bought in St. Omer. It bears a tiny inscription (engraved by a handy man with an improvised tool on scrap metal) which reads: *In loving memory of Edmund Street, D.S.O., Major, and Sherwoods, killed September, 1916, on the Somme*. Major Street entered the House on the first Sunday night of its history (*Tales*, p. 28) and was one of its most loyal helpers. When he was killed his sister in Canada sent ten guineas to the House to be used as thought best. The 10s. was expended on this picture in his memory; the £10 for the foundation of the Ordination Candidates Fund (see p. 49).

\* \* \* \* \*

"In January, 1916, Major Street arrived back from leave with a PORTABLE HARMONIUM somehow blended with his kit" (*Tales*, p. 58). This veteran "groan-box," which has made many Sunday journeys to isolated units with Tubby in a side-car, stands against the wall on the right. It supplied the earliest organ music. The larger ORGAN, which took its place at services, is still very usable—in spite of the side blast of a shell which has left gashes in its case.

The white prayer-desk came immediately after the opening of the Chapel from the Refugees' Stall then situated in a barn off the Rue d'Ypres in Poperinghe. It was previously the property of M. Flamand of Ypres, and was purchased from his *avocat*.

The simpler wooden prayer-desks came from England, having been bought by Miss Rose Innes and Colonel Talbot. One of them bears a special plate in memory of Lieut. Bernard Stenning, 12th East Surreys, who was Scout Commissioner for Surrey, and was killed, after a few weeks' fighting, on July 26, 1917. This desk was used by many for their Confession.

\* \* \* \* \*

An "IN MEMORIAM" ROLL hangs on the right of the Altar. It contains 46 names, beginning with that of Gilbert Talbot. It is the first, but very far from the complete, list of the Elder Brethren specially connected with Talbot House. A much longer list was printed after the war in book form—the *Liber Vitae* of Toc H, which is in use for remembrance day by day in All Hallows Church and the Toc H Chapels throughout the world. A copy lies open in the Upper Room.

The long Communicants' Rolls, usually headed with a picture of the Upper Room, which are to be found in Toc H Chapels, were not used at Talbot House. Communicants were asked to sign their names on SLIPS provided. When the contents of the House was sent home, these slips were packed in sandbags, one of which was lost in transit. The remainder, providing as they do the only list of those who used the House in the War, entitle those survivors who signed them to name themselves "Foundation Members" of Toc H. Among these were less than a dozen women, who are thus the only women members of Toc H. They were nurses who came to the House to make their Communion from the Hospitals near Abecle, known as "Remy Siding," now for ever marked on the map by Lissenthoeck Cemetery, with its 10,000 graves, the second largest in the Ypres area. Two slips, signed by women, are here reproduced.

\* \* \* \* \*

The oak FIGURE of a kneeling monk holding a chalice bears the inscription: *This carving was found in the ruins of Veln (Somme) in 1916 and was brought to Talbot House by Smith-Gunner Charles Payne, 18th Siege Battery, whose body lies at Brielen.* The donor was killed before he could see his gift deposited in the place for which he had brought it with such loving care.

On the right of the Altar hangs a faded blue and white BANNER, with the monogram M. (Maria), which the Queen's Westminsters brought to the House from Ypres in December, 1915. It came probably from the ruins of the Chapter House of the Cathedral.

The characteristic semi-circular WINDOWS on either side of the Altar still show traces of coloured Sunday School pictures—now faded to a uniform green—with which men of the 14th Motor Machine Gun Coy. attempted gallantly to produce a dim, religious light. These are described on a printed Chapel notice of 1917 quite simply as "stained glass windows."

The brass candelabra and wall sconces, the benches and chairs are all modern replacements of those once used. The rough platform lying at the back of the Upper Room was used after 1916 to raise the Carpenter's Bench by steps (as in the contemporary sketch).

<b>TALBOT HOUSE CHAPEL (C of E)</b>	
Communicants' Roll	
Communicants are asked to fill in this paper & leave it for entry on the Register, which has now been kept practically complete for two years.	
Name <u>Dorothy Jones</u>	No. _____
RANK <u>Quarry Solder</u>	REG. <u>12. LANSR</u>
Home Address <u>Hollygate Hall, St. Leonards, Weymouth</u>	
P. B. CLAYTON, Chaplain	
<b>TALBOT HOUSE CHAPEL (C of E)</b>	
Communicants' Roll	
Communicants are asked to fill in this paper and leave it for entry on the Register, which has now been kept practically complete for two years.	
No. _____	Name <u>Ellie J. Macleverty</u>
RANK _____	REG. <u>JAN 4</u>
Home Address <u>The Green, Hereford</u>	
P. B. CLAYTON, Chaplain	

## FROM THE NOTICE-BOARD

TALBOT HOUSE was extraordinarily prolific in notices, grave and gay, which found their way from the fertile pen of the Founder Padre to the board in the entrance hall, where they were eagerly read by men. After serving their turn they were, of course, discarded, but a few have by various means survived. Many of these were framed after the war and became the treasured possessions of Toc H Marks (Houses) at home: they have now been generously surrendered in order that they may hang in the Old House again to meet the eyes of visitors from all over the world. Those among the following which are marked  $\square$  will be found hanging on various walls: the name of the House which held them until 1930 is given in brackets. Those not thus marked are notices the text of which is known, though the original paper has not come back.

### Welcome to the House

$\square$  VERB. SAP.

**W**ELCOME to the one and only TALBOT HOUSE. We don't put SALVE on the doorstep, but they put up SALVAGE next door. Yet the sentiment is in our heart towards you, SALVE all day and any day, and VALE (at the double) at closing time.

You are entering a house with traditions about it. TALBOT HOUSE has been since 1915 the playroom and day nursery of the B.E.F. in these parts. The Salient has really been held for its sole sake. Thousands of men have forgotten about the WAR here week by week during the last two years, and have remembered their own homes. For the House is not a canteen but a democratic club. It is a legacy to you from the old VI Divn. which spent 15 months here in the pleistocene era; and the Trusteeship now rests with a widely representative committee, which manages the House, but gives the Chaplain up as a bad job.

The House is not supported by the Y.M.C.A. or Church Army, but is mainly self-supporting, in addition to various subscriptions from local units, and gifts from old friends. We can't afford wholesale distribution of writing paper, etc., still less the piecemeal scrounging, which we have suffered from lately as never before.

This last obviously the work of gentry who arrived reluctantly on the scene, too late to learn honesty (and other things) from the real men who have been getting killed for their sakes during the past three years; these persons are evidently still in sufficient safety not to know the value of a clear conscience in dangerous duties.\*

This is a sad digression. The sum of the financial matter is that the House is too poor to be victimised, and not too proud to welcome little gifts, etc.; e.g., we are at present, as Mrs. Malaprop says, "enamelled of the idea" of having an *Encyclopædia Britannica* in the Library, and you will march lighter to the Rhine without it in your pocket.

A good Talbotousian will take his share in the diverse activities of the House; and whatever talents he has will be willingly used in the common interests. Singers will sing (so will the Chaplain, with the best intentions, poor fellow), reciters will raise their arms and lower their voices, conjurers will borrow (and return) coins of the realm (if any), chess-players will try to convert draughtsmen to a nobler calling, letter-writers will drown their spelling in a common ink-pot, readers will deal gently with the printed page, all bets (none are allowed) will go to the Harmonium Fund, Sidesmen will sidle, and Churchwardens will churchward (and no one will come back a week later to pick up their gas helmets), everyone will drop in on the poor old Chaplain, especially at tea-time, and all (except conscientious objectors) will climb up to the chapel for family Evensong at 6.15 p.m.

The House aims at reminding you just a little bit of your "ain folk." Hence pictures, flowers and freedom. Down, therefore, with all "Teuton Conduct." Be friendly and of a clubbable spirit. This is not a G.R.O. but just a G.R.O.U.S.E. by the Chaplain.

\*An anonymous pencil interjection: "M.M.P., M.F.P. only," and Tubby's pencil comment: "The M.F.P. in Wipers in 1915 had some 40 per cent. casualties."

Tubby's later note: "My own typing in 1916!"

(From The Brothers' House, London.)

❧ UNWELCOME VISITORS.

Welcome yourself to Talbot House. We don't put "salve mats" on the doorstep, but have a salvage dump next door to make up for it. But we want you to feel it is true of your arrival just the same. For you are surely not one of those who—

(1) Imagine the House has an off-licence for magazines, stationery, etc., e.g., I put a current number of Nash's magazine in a cover, heavily stamped, on the first floor last week. In twenty-four hours the cover was empty. This is how misanthropes are made.

(2) Imagine we have the Y.M.C.A. or some unlimited funds at our back. At present we are trying hard (like my Sam Browne does) to make two ends meet. Three noble Divisions (55th, 39th, 38th) help us from their funds. But otherwise we are in a bad way. My tie-pin was in pawn long ago: and even the House is in Pop.

Writing materials for use in the House cost some £6 a month, so that he who departs with his pockets full of envelopes is guilty of what Mr. Punch calls "Teuton conduct."

(3) Woe worth the imbecile who begins three letters one after another on three sheets of paper, with a fourth to try nibs and fancy spelling on; and, with one large boot on a fifth sheet and the other on a pad of blotting-paper, splashes ink about like a cuttle-fish (is it?), and draws a picture (libellous, we hope) of "my darling Aggie" on a sixth sheet, and then remembers that he really came in to play billiards.

The House aims at reminding you a little tiny bit of "your ain folk." Hence pictures, flowers, and freedom. Help to strengthen the illusion of being of a Club-able spirit.

This is not a G.R.O., but just a G.R.O.U.S.E. by the poor old chaplain.

(From Mark VII, London.)



❧ NOTICE.

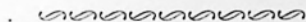
To all members of the human race, and others, who are unwise enough to enter this House.

You are "for it" now. Once inside Talbot House, and there's no saying what you will have to do to get out again. You may of course be in luck's way, and out of mine. Hundreds of men have come in and out several times, and lived to tell the tale of a peaceful hour in an arm-chair, with a neighbour's snores for lullaby. On the other hand, if a middle-aged parson in a very old tennis blazer sights you, it's all up. You will find yourself mending electric bells, tipping cues, mending lamps, or licking envelopes, before you know where your support line is. Can you sing; recite; act; conjure; debate; play chess; paint scenery; run a cinema? Even if you can't it won't make any difference. He is always doing things he can't do. If you come from Australia, he was born there. From London: he was educated (!) there. From Hampshire: he lives there. He knows seven words of Welsh, and has even been once to Scotland. The best thing to do is to promise him what he wants, to keep him quiet; and, quickly camouflaging yourself with a red-hat band, you will find him flee from you.

P. B. C.

(1917)

(From Mark VII, London.)



❧ EXCELSIOR!

The number of otherwise intelligent human beings who hang about the hall, reading silly notices, and catching well deserved colds, is most distressing.

An occasional straggler drags himself up the staircase, generally in futile search for the canteen, which confronts him in the garden.

Otherwise oil and fuel upstairs waste their sweetness, and the rooms and pictures their welcome.

COME UPSTAIRS AND RISK MEETING THE CHAPLAIN.

As Kipling so finely says :

“What shall they know of Talbot House  
Who only the ground-floor know.”

(From *Mark VIII*, *Sheffield*.)

(1917)



Unsolicited Testimonials

*The first part of this notice (printed in Tales of Talbot House, p. 93) has not at present been recovered. It ran as follows :—*

NOTICE

UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS FROM PUBLIC MEN TO TALBOT HOUSE

THE KAISER WIRELESSES :

As our good old German Shakespeare says, in the “Merchant of Vienna” (*sic* !)  
“A plague on both your Houses.”

HILAIRE BELLOC REMARKS, in his monumental work *The War Hour by Hour, from every Possible and Impossible, Human and Inhuman Standpoint*. (Vol. 666, p. 999):—

“The psychological reasons which led to our long tenure of the Salient are now increasingly apparent to all soldiers ; they were not merely international, but *highly domestic*.”

HENRY V. (per the late Lewis Waller) DECLAIMS : “Talbot . . . shall be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.”

LORD NORTHCLIFFE DICTATES :

“Whatever sinister influences may operate at home, patriotic ardour is, as ever, the temper of our vast Armies. So eager are our gallant men to meet the foe, that I myself have seen great queues of men formed up in communication trenches, unable to find room in the front line. The fierce light of Mars gleams in every eye. Thus it has been found necessary to establish counter-attractions to counter attacks behind the lines.”

☞ (*The following continuation hangs in the House*) :—

. . . Some of these places, *one in particular*, are almost as redolent of luxury as Donnington Hall itself.”

HORATIO BOTTOMLEY SPEAKS OUT :

“When I left the shell-swept area of General Headquarters, the dull reverberation of machine guns made me, like an old soldier, wrap my gas helmet closer round my knees. Haig—you may trust him—I say, you may trust him—said to me : ‘Keep your napper down, old man ; think what your life means to England.’

“On our way back, we motored through a small town, which the General beside me especially asked me not to specify to my two million readers. We flashed past the gloomy doorway of a miserable House in a narrow street. A smug and sour-faced parson stood in the doorway of the so-called Soldiers’ Club, with a bundle of tracts in one hand and a subscription list in the other. Mark my words. You know the type. The so-called Church has not stirred a finger anywhere in the war-zone for anyone.”

FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF LICENSED AND UNLICENSED ESTAMINETS :

“We deeply resent the ruinous competition of this detestable House, which wounds our tenderest susceptibilities. The place must be put out of bounds at once. *Verboten Eingang*.”



FROM AN AMERICAN ALLY: "Gee. Some shanty. What? If we'd only known, guess we'd have chipped in three falls back."

From { A STRAY OFFICER: }  
      { A SHY PRIVATE: } "Isn't this an Officers' Club?"

January 25, 1918.

(From Mark VII, London)

*A "testimonial" (this time genuine) written in Talbot House in March, 1918, and left behind for Tubby by an Argyll and Sutherland Highlander. It is laboriously written backwards and when "translated" by the aid of a mirror reads (with most excusable misspelling) as follows:—*

Flanders. Twelveth Marck Eighteen. To the Officer in charge of Talbot House.

SIR,

On my first visit to "Talbot House" to-day I was almost amazed at the splendid arrangements made to provide what I honestly think it is, a "Home from Home," and I congratulate you and your staff on the completeness of the comforts provided for the Soldiers. I may add that during the years Sixteen and Seventeen I visited many so-called Soldiers Homes or Huts both in France and Flanders but this splendidly equipted House stands unequalled. May God give you strength and grace to "Carry-on."

I am yours Respectfully, Pte. McNAUGHT, A and S. Hrs.,

Attd. Ninty Seventh Bde. H.Q., "Cinema," B.E.F., Flanders.



#### Matters Domestic

EXTRACTED FROM A.C.G.'s. INSTRUCTIONS, FIFTH ARMY.

(b) It is objectionable to describe a chaplain as Colonel, Major or Captain, as it tends to obscure the Chaplain's privileged position of priest ministering to all ranks. Each Chaplain should discourage both officers and men from addressing him by Army rank: compare ruling of Adjutant-General D/3657, 31/3/17. "The badges of rank worn by Chaplains do not carry with them the use of military titles." For your information and necessary action, please. Try and help the Chaplain's work by clearing the air of this miserable delusion.

*Tubby's note: i.e., the things on our shoulders are only camouflage, and we are really meant, and the King's Regulations in the wise old Royal Navy put it, to be "the friend and adviser of all on board."*

P. B. C.

*A much faded pencil letter with Tubby's note: "A letter from Neville Talbot, who took charge while I was in hospital in May, 1916. The 5.9 referred to landed in the garden and blew through the House, mortally wounding a Canadian who had come in with his brother to write a joint letter home. 'Godley' is ex-Sergt. Godley, Foundation member of the Brighton Branch. P. B. C." (This was the only fatal casualty on the premises during our tenancy of Talbot House.)*

DEAR TUBBY,

May 29, 1916.

It's v. late and I'm doggers, but I am glad to hear from you. Daylight is starting all round. I'm off to buy things to-morrow. I wish I had a clearer idea of what you had ordered. I am sending on your letter now that I know where you are.

The Staff will have to go sooner or later, but I am fighting for Godley and Kirklan. We had beastly shelling yesterday (Sunday). I was up at Elverdinghe for H.A. A high explosive landed in the garden just opposite men's latrines, house spattered—a Canadian mortally wounded in hall—a bit driven through four folding doors and through window on street. Hambling had the wind up—he has gone on leave. I must go to bed. Bless you.

(From Mark VIII, Sheffield.)

Ever yours, N. S. TALBOT.

*Tubby remained in hospital at Boulogne from the end of May until well into August, 1916, in which month Neville Talbot left Poperinghe with XIV Corps for the Somme Battle. Here is a letter of this difficult period in the life of Talbot House from Pte. Pettifer ("the Gen") to Tubby in hospital.*

239 A. Pettifer,  
B. E. F.

12.8.16.

MY DEAR SIR,

Don't be alarmed, the old General is still alive and kicking. I think it is almost time I answered your letter, don't you? Never mind, you are a long way from me and cannot hit me—Ah, ah! Well, myself and young Vok (*Cecil Vokins, a fellow-member of the staff of the House*) are very pleased you are coming back again. Of course you know there has been a great change in both houses (*i.e., Talbot House and the Officers' Club*). Sergt. Godley and his men (*i.e., the Guards Division*) have left us, also Mr. Talbot, and Mr. Talbot told me he had a very hard struggle with my Colonel to keep me. Fancy you coming back and finding me in the trenches, once more popping at the boshes! Old Fritz has not sent us any iron rations over for four weeks now, he generally pays a visit about every six weeks, so I suppose we can look out for him. I feel sorry you are so lonely there. Never mind, it is a long way to Tipperary, I mean a long lane that has no turning. Sergt. Godley and the lads all wished to be remembered to you before they went. Myself and young Vok send our love to you and don't forget when you come back—to bed early. We'll see that you don't get knocked up again in a hurry. Well close no(w) with love from the old

GENERAL.

(From Mark V, Southampton.)

CHURCH SHOP.

Cpl. Trower, the Librarian, has also charge of the Church Shop. This was started some time ago for the use of padres. But as a large number of men wish to purchase Bibles, religious books, etc., they also can gladly have the run of the shop, on application to him.

P. B. CLAYTON,  
Chaplain.

Dec. 1st, '17.

(From Mark XII, Halifax.)

HOW TO WIN THE WAR.

SCENE 1: Half-way down the garden. Two chairs and garden table; with tin board and draughtsmen thereon; also a rubbish-box in foreground.

Enter two gunners with two mugs of tea and a paper bag of fruit. One gunner upsets draughtsmen on to the grass, and deposits mug on table. The other amends this procedure by seating himself on the ground, turning the half-full rubbish box upside down, and placing his mug thereon. Finally, enter Padre: *tableau vivant*.

SCENE 2: The first-floor writing room. Both windows tightly closed. Various literary gentlemen busily engaged in caligraphy.

Enter two R.A.M.C. representatives, afraid of too generous a supply of fresh air on the balcony. Each carries three magazines, and two books from the library. These they deposit among the inkpots, pens, and blotting-paper, and proceed to absorb in a slow but expansive manner. Enter more persons desiring to write letters. (*Curtain.*)

NOTICE.

If the Sapper who helped me yesterday, and left his penknife in my room, will apply to me he will receive two apologies—

1. An apology for the trouble I am giving him.
2. The apology for a knife which he left behind.

P. B. C.

#### MY COLD.

No one else seems anxious to issue a bulletin about my cold, so I do it myself, unasked. There are three kinds of cold known to medical science : *viz.*

A cold.

A bad cold.

A Clayton Cold.

It is the last that I have.

Temperature (or is it pulse ?) .101 fusc.

Articulation : foggy.

Laundry bill : 50 per cent. increase.

At present, I am engaged with my fifteenth specific cold cure : a series of large globules, coated in sham sugar, to be taken one every fifteen minutes till health or death supervenes. Another certain remedy recommended is : 1 pt. of hot salt water taken hourly. But I prefer even a cold.

P. B. C.

(From Headquarters archives.)

#### EXCHANGE AND MART.

A handsome, kindly, and middle-aged individual, who prefers to remain anonymous, finds that his neck is growing thicker during long years of warfare, with the result that seventeen-inch shirts and seventeen and a half collars produce a perpetual strangulation. If this should catch the eye of any gentleman upon whose neck the yoke of the Army life is producing the contrary effect, an exchange of wardrobe would be to the welfare of both. Address, P.B.C.F., The Office, T.H.

#### OUR ANIMAL KINGDOM.

Have you been formally introduced to—

*Kitten*, one, white, camouflaged. Belge by parentage, but British (as the catechism says) by adoption and grace. It enjoys the war enormously, and is far too busy getting dirty to have time to spare for getting clean. It has a limited but vivacious repertoire of performances and has betrayed several Scotsmen into forgetting themselves so far as to smile.

*The Love Birds*. Their names "Hunter" and "Bunter" are, as Sam Weller said of the sausage, "wropt in mystery."\* Hunter is plain in appearance ; Bunter is spor. They came from Boulogne in a five-ton lorry, and do nothing in particular, but do it very well.

*The Jackpie or Magdaw*. His name is Jacko ; and his diet bully beef and collar studs. He came from a reserve trench at Elverdinghe : we clipped his wings on arrival, since when he flies much better than before. No ! we decline to slit his tongue, in the hope that he will talk articulately. He talks Welsh perfectly at present.

April, 1917.

#### RATS !

On the literary principle by which Mrs. Beeton is said to begin her chapter on the cooking of apples with a brief reference to the Fall of Man, this notice should open with some reference to the anti-episcopal tendencies displayed by rats in the lamentable food-hoarding case of the late Bishop Hatto. But our need is too urgent for literary allusions

What the House has to face is a plague of rats, all of them heavy or welter-weight, against Don Whiskerandos, our cat, who is featherweight only, so can't be expected to make good.

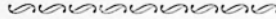
Wanted therefore ; *the loan of a good ratting terrier, ferrets, or other rat-strafting rodent.* A rat seen last night measured about four feet from stem to stern.

\* "Hunter-Bunter" was the affectionate nick-name of General Sir Aylmer Hunter Weston, M.P., Commanding 8th Corps, in whose area Poperinghe then lay.

## HOW THE WHEELS GO ROUND

BY " I " O " U " CORPS.

For the next few days, the total staff of the House is five, including Jimmy, the presiding magician of the maconachie. A reasonable complement for the House, hall, and garden is eleven, including the canteen. So, if the antimacassars aren't watered, or the aspidiſtras dusted, or the pot-pourri distributed for a few days, don't think " there's something rotten in the state of Denmark."



### NOTICE.

Owing to the descent of a meteorite upon the electric lighting plant, the House is temporarily reduced to the oil and grease expedients of a bygone age. In regard to the former, gentlemen will please desist from turning the wick upwards, as the augmentation of the illumination thus secured is extremely temporary, and results in a soot bath and a cracked chimney. In regard to the latter, remember what Shakespeare says about its illuminant attractiveness, and please draw the blinds.

October 2, 1917.



### STOP PRESS.

A tidy draft of reinforcements in woollies—i.e., socks, etc.—has reached T. H. from the ever-generous Mrs. Fry of Bristol.

Applications for the same should be made to the Chaplain. All queues prohibited by Sir A. Yapp. Allotment, one sock per battalion.

January 14, 1918.



## The Annual Children's Party

*"On three occasions the House feted the Belgian children of Poperinghe with incredible energy." (See Tales of Talbot House, p. 63)*



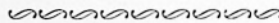
### OUR PARTY FOR BELGIAN CHILDREN.

The first party is due on Thursday next (6th), S. Nicholas Day. The children come at 1.30 and perambulators call for them at 4.30 p.m. Hundreds of delightful toys have arrived from home, thanks to the families of loyal Talbotousians. If in any case these have not been written to, please ſtrafe me, and the letter of thanks shall go forthwith. Appended is the form of invitation.

P. B. C.

I. 12. 16.

(From Mark XIV, Salford.)



The " form of invitation " in Flemish, repeated in French on the back, runs as follows :—

De H. H. Voorzitter en Beſtuurleden van Talbot House, beſtaande uit Officieren en soldaten van het Britiſch leger, begeerende hunne kleine Belgische vriendjes als naar oude gewoonte de feeſtdag van St. Niklaas vreugdevol te zien doorbringen, hebben de eer M . . . . . uit te noodigen tot het kinderfeef, welk zal gegeven worden op 6 December om 1.30 Uren namiddag in Talbot House, 35, Gaſthuis ſtraat.

Het feef zal beſtaan uit allerhande ſpelen, verfriffchingen, uit deelen van ſpeelgoed en Cinema Vertooning.

Vor de kleinen welk op heden niet uitgenoodigd zijn wordt een tweede feest op 1 Januari.

Het spijt ons dat de geringheid van plaats waarover wij beschikken ons niet toelaat de ouders uit te noodigen. Degenen die hunne kleinen na het feest willen naar huis leiden kunnen ze om die hunne kleinen na het feest willen naar huis leiden kunnen ze om 4.30. Uren namiddag komen halen.

[Translation : The Chairman and Committee of Talbot House, consisting of officers and men of the British garrison, desiring that their young Belgian friends according to old custom should spend the Feast of St. Nicholas happily, have the honour to invite M. . . . . to the Children's Party, which will be given on December 6 at 1.30 p.m. in Talbot House, 35, Rue de l'Hôpital. The party will consist of all sorts of games, refreshments, a distribution of toys and a Cinema show. For the little ones who are not thus invited a second party will be held on January 1. We regret that the lack of space at our disposal does not permit us to invite the parents. Those who wish to conduct their children home after the party can come and fetch them at 4.30 p.m.]

*"The last children's party (on January 1, 1918) almost ended in tragedy, for before its completion bombing began. No harm was done, and the children were imperturbable—far more so than their parents and their hosts. A rumour, however, reached Blighty, with the result that some melancholy Jaques in the House of Commons started a question as to the number of Belgian children who had been massacred at a party in Poperinghe by bombs dropped from an English aeroplane!" (Tales of Talbot House, p. 63.) The following letter of thanks from the Sisters who kept the School is hung in the House: it bears the rubber stamp C.R. (z.A.), No. 6112/D.6. Entré le 9.2.18.*

POPERINGHE, 8 FEBR., 1918.

Achtbar Heeren Officieren,

Ø In naam van onze 232 leerlingen, hebben wy de eer U, met ganscher herte, te bedanken, voor al het speelgoed, dat eij van nive milddadigheid ontoagen hebben. Met ware voldoening herinneren eij sich den aangenamen dag, alsdan ouer gebracht, en de goedheid van hunne, Achtbare Woldoeners. Seer geeerne bidden eij den goeden God dat Hij de Achtbare Heeren Officieren van alle rampen speere en al de begeerten van huy goedheit voltoe.

Geligt te aanveerden. Achtbar Heeren Officieren, de uitdrukking ouser gevoelens van hoogachting.

De zusters van Boesinghe,  
Meisjesschool van 't Hooge,  
Poperinghe.

Translation : Honoured Sirs, In the name of our 232 pupils we have the honour, from our whole hearts, to thank you for all the toys which they have received from your generosity. With real gratitude they remember the pleasant day which they spent and the kindness of their worthy benefactors. Very willingly do they pray the good God that He may spare the worthy officers from all dangers and fulfil all the desires of their goodness. Permit us to send you, honoured Sirs, the expression of our feelings of respect. Signed : The Sisters of Boesinghe.



## The Adopted Child of the House

*"For three years the House collected more than the yearly maintenance of an adopted child for the Waifs and Strays Society. This little girl, whom none of us had ever seen, was the object of the most affectionate solicitude among small and great. The Military Police in the Prison at Ypres collected eagerly on her behalf even during the exceedingly rough period of April, 1917. Major Harry Jago, D.S.O., M.C., of 2nd Devons, asks anxiously for her in the last letter before his death. One Lancashire lad, than whom no more loyal friend could be met with, told me for three Sundays in succession how his officer was giving a prize for the best kept mules. And it was not until one night, when he came in triumph and laid the prize money in my hand for the little girl, that I knew the secret of his ambition. Yet another, having lost his sole chance of leave, through its closing down for the fighting time ahead, paid in the hundred francs which he had saved to spend at home. If any endowment ever carried blessings with it, Hannah Mitchell was blessed indeed." (Tales of Talbot House, p. 64.) Three notices about this, dated 1918, here follow, the first two announcing the collection to be made and the third its result. Contributions for Hannah Mitchell were kept up by London Houses of Toc H after the war until she was launched on her career.*

Every Lent Talbot House has collected a considerable sum for the Waifs and Strays Society. Last year we set ourselves the ambitious task of adopting a child—Hannah Mitchell by name (aged 8)—and paying for her maintenance under the excellent care of the Society. The result was splendid. More than £20 was raised here, and another £2 in the Prison at Ypres. This Lent, the Society have asked us to undertake her maintenance for another twelve months. This will mean a big effort, and widespread sympathy and self-denial; the vein of copper is more difficult to work than it was last year, and that of silver almost beyond reach. But if every one helps who can, we shall do it.

Collecting boxes will be placed in various parts of the House; and may gladly be had on application for the various messes in the neighbourhood. All Church Collections will go to the same object, until Easter. Already donations of 20 frs. (H.A.C.) and 1 fr. (Sigs.) have come in, before this notice is posted.

Remember: "What I spent, I lost: what I gave, I have."

14. 2. 18.

P. B. C.

The case papers about Hannah may be seen in the Chaplain's room. Her father was a Mons man, invalided out of K.O.S.B.s in '16, who died of consumption.—P.B.C.

(From Mark IX, Bristol.)

### HANNAH MITCHELL FUND.

I am getting rather windy as to the £18, which is our minimum endowment required for our Waifs and Strays Society contribution, in order that the House may not fail this year for the first time to support our adopted child. We have about £10 so far, with only another fortnight to go. Of course, there are several boxes out which will help greatly if they come back in the same plethoric condition in which they returned recently from the Wheeler-Sergeant of the Essex Battery.

But there will have to be real generosity during the next fortnight, if we are to make good.

Meanwhile, may I thank Pte. Wallace, who does not give his address, for the gift of 10 frs., which is going to the Fund. All Sunday offertories, etc., also go to it, until Easter Day.

18. 3. 18.

P. B. CLAYTON,

Chaplain.

Hannah Mitchell is safely provided for during another year. The old House has raised in all £16 1s. 8d., to which Little Toc H is adding another £6, raised in Wipers, also during Lent.

For the information of the casual visitor it must be explained that the child is the adopted daughter of Talbot House, which guarantees to pay £22 per annum for her maintenance to the Waifs and Strays Society.

This year, owing to local conditions of change and depletion, the task looked well-nigh beyond our reasonable hopes, but thanks to the real sacrifice of several true Talbotousians, it is faithfully accomplished. Laus Deo !

April 2, 1918.

P. B. CLAYTON,  
Chaplain.

Meanwhile it is a joy also to announce that the Easter Offertory for the Army Ordination Candidates Fund totalled the magnificent sum of 250 francs, and this with the town practically deserted. P. B. C.

(From Mark IX, Bristol.)



### The Service Ordination Candidates

"Chief among other objects for which Talbot House appealed was the Service Candidates Fund" (referred to in the last paragraph of the preceding notice), "which indeed was opened by large offertories from Talbot House, the first donation being from Major Street's family. . . . The whole scheme for Service Candidates, as it was afterwards called, originated in Talbot House, and some two hundred of the original candidates enlisted there. . . . When it became obvious in 1915 that the war was destined to be prolonged, the future recruitment for the Ministry of the Church (of England) was a matter calling for considerable foresight. . . . In the Challenge in May, 1915, the vision of a great recruitment from all ranks of the Army, resulting in colleges of men of every type and social standing, united by the experience of war, and called so as by fire, was first set forth. And in Talbot House the men were first recruited. Later the lists grew beyond the scope of private responsibility, and were transferred to Headquarters." (Tales of Talbot House, p. 67.) Provision for training was promised from the fund and "the fulfilment of this promise has cost no less than £423,160; but the total number of 1,600 of the present junior clergy of the Church of England were thus enabled to proceed to Orders." (Plain Tales from Flanders, p. 68.) Soon after the Armistice a men's school, under the Rev. F. R. Barry, was established at Le Touquet, and an officers' school under the Rev. E. K. Talbot (Neville's elder brother) at Radinghem. In January, 1919, Tubby himself came to England to search for a building for the Test School and finally lighted on Knutsford Prison, then empty. In January, 1927, the School moved to the old Rectory at Hawarden, where it still continues on a smaller scale.

#### ORDINATION CANDIDATES.

(Note by Tubby on corner of original. This is a 1918 amended notice of the original version in 1916. P.B.C. 9.4.23.)

It is not known widely enough among Churchmen in the Army that the Church at home has adopted a great plan whereby to add to her Ministry after the war a great body of the best men from the Army and Navy, irrespective of their financial ability to meet the cost of their training.

Already, under this scheme, over 1,400 candidates for Ordination have come forward from all ranks and all Fronts: 150 of these have been enrolled in Talbot House. I shall be glad to get in touch with any further candidates, and to explain the scheme to any inquirers.

P. B. CLAYTON.

(From Mark IX.)



## Little Talbot House Opens in Ypres

*When Little Talbot House (see p. 23) started in Ypres in November, 1917, the following notice appeared on the board in Poperinghe.*

### Ø LITTLE TALBOT HOUSE.

Was born yesterday in Ypres. It stands (more or less) in Rue de Lille, and was once a large lace factory. The red brick frontage on the road is quite imposing, but the back premises are not quite what they were. However, there are six rooms upstairs, and a convenient and capacious cellar.

We are sending up some stuff from the old House, and passers-by must look in and see Mr. Goodwin, the chaplain in charge.

Church tithe for the present may be paid in kind, the kind being roofing-iron and sandbags. Gas and water already laid on.

14.11.17.



*A note to Tubby from Padre R. J. Goodwin, in charge of Little Talbot House.*

Little Talbot House,

DEAR CLAYTON,

19.11.17.

Bearer is my servant. We have moved into Lace School and wait "straining on the leash." When are you coming to see us? I want particularly to talk over one or two things. I left my gas bag in your room on Thursday; can you let him bring it back?

All kind wishes.

Yours fraternally,

R. J. GOODWIN.

*(From Mark VIII, Sheffield.)*

*Notes connected with the closing of Little Talbot House appear on p. 54.*



## A Mission in the House

*In the winter of 1917, the dark winter of Passchendaele fighting, the Rev. E. K. Talbot (Neville's brother, head of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield) conducted a mission in the House. On December 29 he wrote to Tubby, "I want to say how much I loved being with you at Pop, and breathing the air of Talbot House—the only place on the Front which has kinslip with Bethlehem." The following note, which now hangs in the House, is a quotation from the Mirfield Magazine of March, 1917, in Mrs. Clayton's handwriting; it bears the inscription by Tubby, "My mother's copy, sent out to me in Poperinghe, of Ted Talbot's words concerning the 1916 mission to the House. P.B.C."*

Ø I have been holding a continuous mission and an interesting bit of experience at Talbot House, an Institution named after my Brother and now run by Clayton of Portsea—much the most Christian Institution on the British Front. It was really refreshing to get into an atmosphere entirely disinfected of khaki and saturated with real Evangelic Brotherhood and joy.

They have got a heavenly chapel and there we had our Mission—which, at Clayton's request, was on Personal not National religion. The men were mostly those of good will and very keen.

*(From Mark IX, Bristol.)*

## A Debate and a Concert Party

### NOTICE.

On Wednesday next, Jan. 30, at 6.45 p.m. a Public Debate will be held in the Hall. The motion before the House will be that this House is profoundly convinced that the War will be over this year (1918).

Prime Mover :

Lieut. Gray

Seconded by :

Pte. I. Dunno, W.H.O.

also

Rfm. Barrs, N.Z.R.

Opposer :

Spr. Jenkins, A.R.O.D.

Seconded by :

Spr. Birkett, R.E.Sigs.

It is of touching historical interest to note that, when debated in 1915, the motion was carried by about 100 to 10 : the wording being "convinced." In 1916 by 150 to 8 : the wording being "decidedly convinced."

Which may lead the philosopher to the thought that Resolution (not resolutions) will bring about the final result.

P. B. C.

(Note added). Final score : 1918—48-48. Carried by casting vote of the Chairman.

(From Mark VII, London.)

### NOTICE.

Anyonewho thinks that their unit would enjoy a visit from our Concert Party, or a performance of our pantomime or "Box and Cox," or "Detective Keen," should get in touch with either Q.M.S. Johnson (8th Corps Sigs.), or Sergeant Evans\* (Delousing Station), or Pte. Wilmot, or myself here in the House. The transport can be arranged, we can gladly bring any of these shows to you, but cannot for the present use our Concert Hall here, as closely packed audiences in the town are for the time taboo.

30.3.'18.

P. B. CLAYTON.

\*Post-war note by Tubby : Eddie Evans, Manchester Toc H.



## The 'Big Push,' 1918—in Retreat

*Six of the following items are from Headquarters archives and are shown in one frame ; the others are here inserted in chronological order. The first, an extract from Tales of Talbot House, tells the story of the whole series of events.*

Poperinghe was now systematically evacuated. Civilians were evicted as casualties among them were daily increasing, and institutions such as cinemas were closed down. The Officers' Club (*now Skindles Hotel*) to the great distress of Sergt. Major Hutton, its manager, was closed, and the doors of Talbot House alone remained open. Already we had received notice to quit, but the order had been postponed in operation through the kind offices of the A.P.M., who, knowing the situation on the spot, saw that the existence of Talbot House was at this juncture essential from a provost point of view ; for, with all the doors shut, troops still entering the town would be driven to disorder, and for the matter of that the closing of an institution so well known as Talbot House was in a real sense harmful to the general morale. Our staff was, however, reduced, and with those left to us we prepared to stand a siege.

On Sunday, April 14, my opposite number (*Padre Goodwin*) from Little Talbot House in Ypres arrived late at night with his two orderlies and a strange miscellany of sacred and secular salvage. A few days later Dr. Magrath (*now of Toc H, Sheffield*), of the Y.M.C.A., Ypres, who longer than any living man survived residence in that amazing city, joined forces with us also. Between us we reorganised the House's work to meet the new conditions. The Chapel was moved downstairs, entrances and cellars were heavily fortified—again the patriotic pamphlets were admirable for filling sandbags. One shell carried away the stage of the concert hall, and two more landed in the garden; a bomb penetrated the water-conduit; but the House continued in the greatest happiness to administer comfort, natural and supernatural, to troops still moving through the deserted town. The most valuable fittings had already been removed into safety, thanks to our friends in the Railway Operating Department; so that if the Kaiser had succeeded in reaching the town suddenly one morning for breakfast, according to his announced intention, Talbot House would scarcely have provided him with suitable accommodation.

During these weeks the orders for our closing were frequently repeated, but we put the telescope to the blind eye. To close, when there was still much to be done that there was no one else could do, was a tragedy which only the soul of a hireling could sustain. We took every possible precaution for the safety of our customers, whose gratitude increased as their numbers grew less. Finally, on Whit Tuesday, May 21, we received imperative orders to leave at once; and so, with great sadness, the doors of the dear old House were closed for the first time in their happy history. (*Tales of Talbot House, p. 78-9.*)



*Pink "signal," dated April 7 (received 6.18 p m).*

Ø As Poperinghe is out of bounds to all troops it is considered that all furniture should be cleared away and Talbot House closed down. aaa. Are you prepared to open up at another place? aaa. Wire reply. A.C.G. 2nd Army.



*This suggestion from the Assistant Chaplain-General of 2nd Corps was not complied with. Meanwhile Padre Goodwin, of Little Talbot House, and C. J. Magrath, of Y.M.C.A., had to evacuate Ypres, as the line fell back, and joined Tubby at Talbot House. Here are two notes from Goodwin and a canteen account connected with this evacuation.*

(i)

*Note on two "buff slips" with the rubber stamp of Little Talbot House, Ypres, and the date 10.4.1918.*

Ø DEAR TUBBY,

Two requests—(i) If we *do* have to make a sudden exit *a la* Shakespeare (alarms without, shouting, they hurry off), what are we to do? Can you raise a promise of a 3-ton lorry from an outer area which could sail in to receive the more valuable things? If so, we will hold on to the last gasp and save all we can. If not, shall I burn and smash piano, chairs and all, rather than let the Hun have them? Stores we must give away or destroy.

GOODIE.

(On the back he requests Tubby to pacify 832 Area Employment Company, which—with the magnificent unconcern of the Army machine in moments of crisis—had ordered both Goodie's orderlies back to Poperinghe to have their kit inspected and renewed. Both men were in rags and unfit: "neither Moore nor Ray can get on a moving lorry"—and lorries, for good reasons, were forbidden to stop in Ypres to "take up or set down" passengers.)

4.30, Thursday

☐ *Tout le monde ayant le vent au dessus*, and Magrath hoping to have a lorry to-morrow. I am sending my surplus kit and the more valuable articles from the Chapel for a change of air to Poperinghe. They can easily return later, if all goes well.

GOODIE.

*Account of the last day's takings in the canteen of Little Talbot House, in pencil, with note in ink at the bottom, April 14. Left Ypres 10.45 in Car for Pop. (All did not "go well"; in the subsequent months of bombardment the House in Ypres was almost destroyed and was never reoccupied by To: H.)*

## ☐ SUNDAY.

Notes	..	55
Silver	..	3.90
Nickel	..	7.75
P.O...		3.90

70.55

*These three "chits" were brought home by Sid Ray, orderly at Little Talbot House, later Secretary of Storkton-Tue H. (From Mark XVIII, Newcastle.)*

*Notice (undated), stained and faded from being attached to outside of front door. It shows the House still occupied, but with its operations much restricted.*

☐ Although, in obedience to the order of 2nd Corps, the House as a canteen etc., must remain temporarily closed, it also remains the billet of the Garrison Chaplain and of Dr. Magrath, who will always be glad to be of any service to any visitors. If the door is shut, the bell on the left is still in the best of working order.

Father Stanton used to tell a story of a small and ragged boy who appeared on his doorstep and asked to see him "spiritual." On being admitted to the library, the boy looked doubtfully at Father Stanton's cassock, and opened the spiritual conversation with the remark, "Have yer got such a thing as an old pair of trousers about yer."

\* \* \* \* \*

"This House," said the old Bishop in *Les Misérables* to Jean Valjean, "is not my house but God's; and is open not to him that hath a name but to him that hath a need."

P. B. C.

*A white "signal," dated April 14 (but bearing the stamp of Town Major, Poperinghe, 15.5.18—sic!) gives peremptory orders for closing.*

☐ Q orders Talbot House to be closed at once. Please acknowledge and report that the order has been complied with. aaa. D.A.C.G., 2 Corps.

*An urgent plea by the Assistant Provost Marshal of Poperinghe brought the House a short reprieve. Here is Tubby's comment from the Notice Board.*

## ☐ T.H. AND THE RECENT GALE OF WIND.

When the history of the House is written, the last fortnight will have a paragraph to itself. Until a fortnight ago, the grand old House was apparently resigned to a placid old age in the suburbs of war, where the rumours germinate. Suddenly at 11.30 p.m. on Sat. week, came a bolt from the blue, a pink order saying "Shut up." To this we replied sleepily: "shut up yourself." Sunday brought the same refrain: "shut up," to which we replied "shut up?"

Monday put the lid on it. Our Staff was withdrawn, and we reported broken-heartedly "shut up!" Meanwhile on Sunday night the Staff of Little Toc H in Wipers was given sudden notice to quit. On Monday Mr. Goodwin led a sortie and got away the piano, etc. (we had only put the last nail in our new concert hall there twenty four hours previously!). On Tuesday, enters the hero of the piece in the person of A.P.M. Pop. He championed our cause to such effect, that my movement order is cancelled, and the House is left, denuded, it is true, of staff and creature comforts, but "*semper eadem*" (I forgot the Latin dictionary is at present in pawn with our noble friends of R.O.D.). We hope soon to have the House in apple-pie order again; meanwhile you will only drive us to misanthropy if you persist in strewing nutshells on the floor.

P. B. C.

22.4.18.



*A white "signal," dated May 20, gave the final and irrevocable order to close down.*

☐ Padre Clayton, Talbot House.

Q insist that you shall vacate Talbot House and seek billet elsewhere. aaa. Please wire acknowledgment and what steps you are taking. D.A.C.G., II. Corps.

*Tubby noted at the time on the wire:* In reluctant obedience to this order my billet is henceforward at Dingley Dell, Hambrook (across Louvie Aerodrome).

*He added a post-war note:* This is the original wire of eviction (May, 1918), from Q of 2nd Corps, an ultimatum which brought to a head a series of orders to close down. But the Kaiser failed to reach Poperinghe after all,

(From Mark II.)



*Final orders compelled the complete closing of the House on May 21. On the day before that the landlord wrote the following demand for rent: the letter bears a post-war note at the head in Tubby's writing.*

☐ Note.—M. Coevoet was (and is—till Toc H can buy its birthplace) the owner of the original House, No. 35, Rue de l'Hôpital, Poperinghe. We paid him 150 frs. rent a month all through unflinchingly, and he then demanded 2,000 frs. "*degats*" for the damage which the Boche had done to it, after the Armistice. Here is a letter of receipt at the most critical period of the war, with the Boche sitting on Kemmel Hill, and Poperinghe "no place for boys."

Monsieur le R. P. Clayton,  
Talbot House, Poperinghe.

"Chalet Lutheran,"  
La Pommeraye,  
St. Desir par Lisieux (Calvados)  
le 20 Mai, 1918.

J'ai bien reçu votre honorée du 28 Avril dont j'ai retiré la somme de trois cents francs en billets de Banque pour loyer de ma maison rue de l'hôpital a Poperinghe pour deux termes du 7 Mars au 7 Mai, 1918. Ce dont je vous remercie. Comme j'avais quitté le pays pour mettre ma famille en sécurité en France, votre lettre m'a été réexpédiée a notre nouvelle adresse en France. Si vous pouvez continuer à occuper la maison, vous m'obligeriez en m'envoyant directement à l'adresse ci-dessus le montant des prochains termes. Agrééz, Monsieur le Capitaine, l'assurance de ma parfaite consideration.

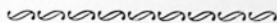
M. COEVOET.

*Translation:* I have received your valued letter of April 28, from which I took the sum of 300francs in bank notes for the rent of my house, Rue de l'Hôpital at Poperinghe, for two periods from March 7 to May 7, 1918. For this I thank you. As I have left the country to put my family in safety in France, your letter has been forwarded to me at our new address in France. If you are able to continue to occupy the house, you will oblige me by sending the rent for the ensuing periods to the above address. Receive, Monsieur the Captain, the assurance of my perfect consideration.

(From Mark IX, Bristol.)

## ii Advance

Tubby, Magrath, "The Gen," and such other orderlies as were left, had retired to a temporary camp which they christened "Dingley Dell," near Louvie Chateau to the north-west of Poperinghe, having first seen the principal furniture and ornaments of Talbot House removed to safety. The tide of battle turned with the summer and Poperinghe was again "put in bounds" to troops. On September 30, Talbot House re-opened its doors.



Notice, on two sheets, from the Notice Board.

♠ October 1st : "Pheasant shooting begins, and Charles Letts' Diaries for 1919 are published." Hitherto the world has apparently no memorable event to which the day is sacred. Future generations will however remember it as the day on which Poperinghe reopened, and Talbot House was found, like Macbeth's Scotland, standing where it stood.

Since you saw it last, the mice have broken the windows, aerated the concert hall—which was always stuffy—and punctured the roof and the garden wall in several places. But good fairies have been busy since then, and the paint and whitewash are scarcely dry.

You will find some alterations, which we hope you will approve ; but the *Dramatis Personæ* remain much the same—

e.g. Chief of Staff—Eddie Evans, the Welsh Comedian.

George, the Librarian—L.-Cpl. G. Trower.

The Man that knocks the hammer with the nails—A. Rose.

First Aid—C. Vokins.

The Strong Man from Ireland—P. Flynn.

The General—A. Pettifer.

Actor-Manager—C. Willmott, and so forth.

The first floor is ready for you, with a larger Library and a bigger billiard table.

[Second Sheet]. Old friends of the House will find the old arrangements rudely disturbed for the time being. The old Chapel is temporarily dismantled, and the temporary Chapel, always open as ever, is in the room on the ground floor behind the tubular bells. Evensong daily at 6.30 p.m.

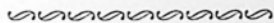
The Library has also shifted downstairs, and is in the front room, quite cosy, though depleted of many books : this is a hint your generosity will not fail to act upon.

The Chaplain is ensconced in the room opposite the staff room at the back, with a tessellated pavement, a stove with a poor digestive system, and a series of vivid mural paintings of antlered stags and swans with necks like giraffes.

On the first floor there is an excruciating piano, a bad billiard table, an excellent bagatelle board, a complete set (up to the time of going to press) of chess-men, and the usual mouldy collection of pens, ink and blotting pads.

The concert hall received the side blast of an *obus*, and is closed for a week or so. But the garden will soon make up for it all. Keep an eye on our mustard and cress. We certainly shall, if you go to look for it.

P. B. C.



Notice, of the same date, with printed heading—TALBOT HOUSE, 35, Rue de l'Hopital—200 yards from the Square.

♠ The dear old House is now open again, like the flowers in May. Like them, its first attempt at opening met with a cold snap, so it went to sleep again. Now the lawful time for awakening has come, and it proceeds with prudence to unfold itself. The ground floor is pretty well advanced. The first floor is partially ready. The second floor is totally bare still. The Chapel in the attic (the oldest Chapel in the B.E.F.) is practically complete again ; and Services will be held on Sunday at the old times, D.V.

On the day of our opening, four of the Staff have gone on leave, long overdue. So the blue blazer (*Tubby's own habitual dress indoors*) will be dirtier than ever during the next fortnight.

Owing to the canteen shortage, the Church Army are helping us by running a tea-room in the Nissen hut *dans le jardin*, but you will have to wait for your grocery queue till the C.A. canteen opens in the Square, etc. Mr. Legge, a fellow-citizen of "Pompey" with myself, is the Church Army worker who is kindly taking the tea and biscuit problem off my rheumatic old shoulders; so that all epicures, who do (or don't) like Serjeant-Major's tea, will find themselves up against him, while I hold the sponge and the prize money.

P.S.—The absence of a canteen will mean to the House the loss of its only certain source of income. So presents of books, etc., for the Library will not only win you a smile from George, but will provide what we can no longer afford to buy. My wrist watch was in pawn long ago; and even the House is in POP. P. B. C.

1.10.18.

(From *The Brothers' House, Kennington.*)



*Very soon the shortage of "customers" at the House called forth the following:*

Ø NOTICE.

TO MOVE OR NOT TO MOVE, THAT IS THE QUESTION.

Owing to the inconsiderate retirement of our old neighbour, the Boche, Toc H is in a pretty fix. If we move—*e.g.*, to Courtrai—we may be high and dry by the time we have reached it with all our lorry-loads of belongings. Also, if the period of demobilisation is really at hand, this may be an important salvage centre. And once we vacate the House, we shall never get it again.

Briefly, therefore, T. H. will remain here for the present.

For if the Boche goes to Brussels, we shan't cut any ice in Courtrai.

Or if the Boche goes to Blazes, we shall be wanted here. Q.E.D.

But we expect you to get down here somehow, and see us sometimes. You really must try. October 20, 1918.

(From *Mark VI, Birmingham.*)



Ø A "buff slip," written on both sides, with *Tubby's* note: This characteristic note from Neville Talbot was written on the first Armistice Day. *Fitch* was my new D.A.C.G., 19th Corps. *Andy* was Rev. F. I. Anderson. A.C.G., 2nd Army. *Dick* was Dick Dugdale, killed in the last advance.

P. B. C.

DEAREST TUB,

I am glad. Fitch is lovely. I have written a line. O that you were with me or rather I with you for this new wonderful period. I made a forlorn hope ask for you when I met D.C.G. (*Bishop Gwynne, Deputy Chaplain-General*) and Andy to-day together. But it was met with M.G. (*machine-gun*) fire. But I am glad about your news—and it's all one front and one cause and one King.

Darling Dick—but for you, my great pal out here. Let me share in any brain or rather soul waves.

How miraculous the hour! Thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains, Thy judgments are like the great deep.

Ever with love,

11 Nov., '18.

N. S. T.



## Towards Demobilisation

*The following two notices were copied from the Notice Board at the time by E. G. Matthews of Shrewsbury: the originals in Tubby's handwriting have not been preserved. They show the directions in which Talbot House, which had always helped men to think, was striving to turn their thoughts after the Armistice.*

### NOTICE.

#### VICTORY—AND AFTER.

For three and a half years Britain (and the world in general) has been trying to turn citizens into good soldiers. The time is coming when we must start turning soldiers into good citizens. The task is going to be a tremendous one, and must begin, at latest, now.

Here in Talbot House, we mean to do our bit of study and self-education.

On Tuesday mornings at 11 a.m. papers will be read by experts on, e.g.,

Town Planning,  
The Municipality as Landlord,  
Public Health, etc.

A popular discussion on the same lines will be held on Wednesday evenings.

On Thursdays, 4.30—6.15 p.m., similar discussions, e.g., on "Education," will be held in the Chaplain's Room, to which all are welcome.

The Library now has a special section dealing with Social Problems.

2.12.18.

P. B. C.



### NOTICE.

#### FIXTURES FOR THIS WEEK

Tuesday, 11.30 a.m., in the Chaplain's Room. An Officers' meeting to discuss a paper by Lieut. Redfern on:—"Town Planning and Housing."

Wednesday, 7.0 p.m. The same lecture in the Hall at a general meeting, followed by questions.

Thursday, 4.30 p.m., in the Chaplain's Room. A conference on "Moral Education."  
6.45 p.m. A Chess Tournament in the Hall, at which the challenger will play twelve games simultaneously.

Saturday, 7.0 p.m. A Dramatic Performance by the Talbot House Party.



### Anecdote

HOW TO FIND YOUR BEARINGS ON A DARK NIGHT WITHOUT A COMPASS.

THIS IS AN OLD SCOUT'S TIP.

Take a watch, not your own, tie a string on to it, swing it round your head three times, and then let go, saying to the owner: "That's gone West."

The points of the compass being thus established, you proceed rapidly in the safest direction.



SCENE: *The Wipers Road: any time after dark.*

ENTER WAYFARERS (1ST) AND (2ND).

1ST W.: "Bill, 'ere's a riddle for you. What is a lorry?"

2ND W.: "Give it up."

1ST W.: "A lorry's a thing what goes the other way."

(From *Mark VIII*, Sheffield.)

♣ NATIONAL SYMPTOMS ON SICK PARADE.

1. *The Irishman :*

"Och, doöther dear, I'm kilt intoirely."

2. *The Scotchman :*

"Ah'm no varra weel the s'mornin'."

3. *The Englishman :*

"I don't know what can be wrong with me—I *can't eat*."

(From the notice board in 1917.)

(From Mark VIII, Sheffield.)



♣ NOTICE.

In honour of the return of Paddy (Pte. Flynn) from leave to his post on the staff of the House, the following chestnut is issued to all concerned :

SCENE : *Irish parade-ground.*

DRILL-SERGEANT : "Now then, Rafferty, get those big feet of yours in line, can't you !"

PTE. RAFFERTY : "Arrah ! Sergeant, they're no my feet at all, at all. They're Pte. Murphy's in the back row."



(From Mark XII, Halifax.)

HOW TO CHECK BAD LANGUAGE.

This is a splendid story, really requiring a Scotch accent.

Once upon a time, Doctor Geikie, of Edinburgh, was crossing the Atlantic on the same ship as a loud-voiced, foul-mouthed American. One rough day, when everyone was confined to the smoking room, the American told a series of filthy stories, and then turned insolently to the old Doctor and said :

"I just reckon you haven't added much to our fun, Doctor."

"A'weel," said Doctor Geikie, "I'll tell you a story the noo. Once upon a time, there was a puir wee birrd that had his nest in a tree by the roadside ; and one fine day, after a horse passir by, he came to feed on the droppings. An' when he had his fu', he just skippit back to the tree and began to sing. But a boy came by wi' a wee bit gun, and shot him i' the lug as he sang."

Dead silence, broken by the American.

"Waal, Doötor, if that is the best you can do, I guess we don't think much of it. None of the boys see any d——d point in your tale at all."

"A'weel," said Doctor Geikie, "the moral, sir, is surely plain enough to you. If you're full of dirt, dinna brag about it."

A. C. per P. B. C.



♣ The U.S.A. Navy is not free of red rape, and has latterly taken to send a Navigating Officer down to private shipyards to superintend the launching of new tonnage. After the launch, the bare hull has to be steered into dock for completion, and the bell and telephone system from the bridge to the engine-room is primitive. On one occasion, the Naval Lieutenant found the task rather a trying one, and nervously rang down alterations of speed in rapid succession. Finally, he found himself steering apparently for the dock-wall, and desperately rang full-speed astern, shouting it down the speaking tube at the same time. Whereupon a Scotch voice came up to him : "Awell, aweel, A'm in gude time. I'm nineteen bells behind a'ready."

B. B. per P. B. C.

(B.B. stands for Bishop Brent, Chaplain to the U.S.A. Expeditionary Forces, who visited the House early in 1918. From Mark VII, London.)



# THE LIBRARY OF THE OLD HOUSE

*The following books now fill the cases of the Library on the second floor of the Old House  
(see p. 30).*

## POETRY AND BELLES LETTRES.

THE PROLOGUE, AND THE KNIGHT'S TALE. Chaucer.  
THE KNIGHT OF THE TOWRE. Geoffroi de la Tour.  
A PAGEANT OF ELIZABETHAN POETRY. Symons.  
THE ENGLISH HELICON.  
THE GOLDEN TREASURY. Palgrave.  
HISTORIES, POEMS AND SONNETS. Shakespeare.  
TRAGEDIES. Shakespeare.  
EVERYMAN IN HIS HUMOUR. Jonson.  
POETICAL WORKS. Milton. (3 Editions).  
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